

Just Publish'd.

THe compleat History of the Affairs of *Spain*, from the first Treaty of Partition, to this present time; containing a particular Account of the different Measures taken, since the Peace of *Reswick*, to secure *Spain* to the House of *Austria*, by King *William* of glorious Memory; and the great Actions perform'd by Queen *Anne* and her Allies, in *Spain*, the *Netherlands*, *Italy*, &c. Represented in a new Method by all the Authentick Memorials, Letters, Declarations, Manifestos, Treaties, Alliances, Speeches, Addresses, Answers, Articles, Messages, Orders, Proclamations, Wills or last Testaments, relating to that grand Affair: To which is prefix'd an Introduction, giving a short View of the first Rise, and various Revolutions of that Empire, its Grandure and Designs of Attaining to the Universal Monarchy; and the true Cause of its most surprizing Declension, since the Reign of King *Philip II.* Printed for J. Barnes, at the Crown in Pall-Mall: W. Taylor, at the Ship in St. Paul's Church-yard: R. Gosling; at the Mitre in Fleet-street: J. Phillips, next Door to the Fleece Tavern in Cornhill; and J. Morphew, near Stationers-Hall.

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THE
HAPPY LIFE:
OR, THE
Contented Man,
Shewing the Art,
How to Live Well :
WITH
REFLECTIONS
UPON
Divers Subjects of MORALITY.

PRESENTED
To the *French King* soon after the Battel
of *BLENHEIM*.

By *Monti. de Vernage*, D. D. and Canon of the
Royal Church of *St. Quintin*.

Translated from the *Paris* Edition.

L O N D O N :

Printed for and sold by *W. Kestie*, in *Westminster-Hall*; *G. Harris*, next Door to the *Bagnio* in *St. James's Street*; *W. Carter*, at the *Green Dragon* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*; *J. Philips*, next Door to the *Fleece-Tavern* in *Cornhill*, and *J. Morphew*, near *Stationers-Hall*, 1708.



TO THE
KING.

S I R,

TIS about twelve years,
since I had the Honour
of presenting to your Majesty
a Treatise, entitled, *Moral and
Political Reflections*. The Pro-
tection you were pleased to af-
ford to that Piece has not only
recommended it to your Do-
minions, in its several Editi-
ons, but also to the World, in
its Translations into various
Languages. Encourag'd by
such an uncommon Success, I
presented to your Majesty a-
nother Treatise, concerning
the Perfections of Life, which
meeting with a no less favour-

A 3 able

The Epistle Dedicatory.

able Reception, I thought my self obliged, to follow the same Tract, and to compose and dedicated this *New Treatise of Piety* to your Majesty, to pay you all the possible Acknowledgment and most profound Respect I am capable of. Sir, Piety is so natural to you, that it is next to an Impossibility to write upon that Subject, without enlarging upon what is a Virtue peculiar to your self. 'Tis She, that renders you the Chief Admirer of all your Subjects, who standing amazed at the Prodigious Exploits of your Reign, are still more edify'd by the Example of your Piety. 'Tis She, Sir, that has gain'd you the
the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

the Titles of a Glorious and
Pacifick Prince, of being the
Father of your Native Country,
and the Protector of Religion.
You are not more illustrious
by your Conquests, than by
your Zeal for Religion. It
would prove a very difficult
Task, to represent what
stupendious Effects we see daily
to proceed from your Majesty's
Justice, Wisdom, Moderation,
Magnificence, Goodness, Cle-
mency, Glory; and what sur-
passes all the rest, from your
Love of Religion. Quite daz-
zled with the Sight of these
Prodigies, Sir, there is nothing
remaining for me to do, but to
offer up my most fervent Vows
to Heaven, that the God of
Hosts

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Heaven may prosper your Undertakings, that he may pour out his Blessings upon your most sacred Person, and protract the Course of your Life, so necessary to the State, and precious to the Church, even beyond the ordinary Bounds of Nature ; these are the daily and most ardent Prayers of,

S I R,

Your Majesty's

*Most Humble, most Obedient,
and most Faithful Subject
and Servant, De Vernage,
Dr. of Divinity, and Canon
of the Royal Church of
St. Quintin.*

T H E

THE PREFACE.

THE Contented Man, whom you see represented to your View in this Treatise, is not of the Sect of those Supercilious Philosophers, who boasting of their Felicity, look for it in, and attribute it to their own Strength of Reason. He is so far from entertaining such magnificent Sentiments of his own Person, that he rather considers himself only, as a Compound of Misery and Infirmary; and those high and exalted Thoughts he

The Preface.

has of God, his Creator, make him dispise himself. He is sensible he has nothing of his own ; but stands indebted for every thing to his Creator. He knows, that by his Ingratitude, he is become unworthy of those Graces Heaven has bestow'd upon him, and, that his Blindness and Servitude, are but just Punishments, for the ill Use he has made of his Reason and Christian Liberty. Nay, what is more, I say, he is not ignorant, that he sides even with what opposes his Felicity, and furnishes his Enemies with Arms, wherewith to overcome him. 'Tis this Knowledge of himself, that makes him not found the least hopes upon his own Merits. He must bid farewell to all his Light and Understanding, should he look for his Happiness any where else, but from the Goodness and Mercy of him, who has made and disposes of every thing ; And, since our Humility
im.

The Preface.

implies an undeniable Confession of God's Grandure, and our Acknowledgment and Gratitude, he humbles, nay, annihilates himself, as it were, every Day before him, and by this voluntary Humiliation, obliges him (if we may so call it) to heap upon him daily new Favours, and regenerate him without Intermission. 'Tis in this Divine Correspondence, betwixt this Death and Regeneration, or Resurrection, we must search for our solid Happiness, every thing besides being nothing but Troubles and Inquietudes, nothing but Vexation of Spirit. Thus you see, where it is, the Man I represent to you, looks for his Contentment. All the Grandure and Riches, Fortune sets before us in their utmost Lustre, and which is the only thing coveted by the wise Men of this World, have not Charms enough to insinuate into his Heart, he looks upon them only with Scorn,
or

The Preface.

*or Indifferency ; and all such things
as are apt to flatter the Ambition
or Credulity of the Generality of
Mankind, are consider'd by him no
otherwise than imaginary Phantosmes
and Shadows of true Felicity.*



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THE
HAPPY LIFE:
OR, THE
Contented Man.

CH A P. I.

EVery Man being Master
of his own Tranquillity,
'tis in his Power, through
God's Mercy, to Labour to-
wards its Establishment; 'tis e-
nough to be a Reasonable Man, to
render one self Happy, since Reason

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2 *The Happy Life : Or,*

son furnishes us with every thing, that may tend to our true Satisfaction. From that very Moment, we are sensible we were born to die, and to be saved, this Knowledge alone, is sufficient to instruct us in all the Precepts belonging to this Happiness. The Thoughts of this last Moment, which is to decide our Destiny, and the Considerations upon that happy Eternity which is to succeed it, will fill our Hearts with Joy in the midst of all our Troubles, and with a full Resolution of performing (without intermission) our Duty. As Death ought to be our Object, and Eternity our End, we may, by keeping them constantly in View, run on our Course in spite of Fortune, without knowing what Fear is, unless it be by our Sins ; or the Nature of Hopes, unless by our future Glory.

What a Satisfaction is it, not to have no other Fear, than that of offending God ? And what a Pleasure,
to

to entertain no Hopes, than of the Enjoyment of our future Felicity? Because this Fear, gives us Courage enough to despise every thing; and this Hope, has a certain Virtue of keeping the unruly Desires of our Heart within Bounds: So, that our Mind always relishing the Sweets of what is *Good*, in order to pursue it; and dreading the *Evil*, to avoid it; we begin to taste the Pleasures of Paradise, promis'd to us through Christ's Merits, without being very much apprehensive of the Torments of Hell, wherewith we are threaten'd through God's Justice. We need not then dread the Stroaks of Lightening, nor the Noise of Thunder, our Tranquillity is the Product of Conscience, and we look upon the Favours, wherewith the World would entice us, with so much Indifference, that as often as we think them worth our Thoughts, 'tis with a firm

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Resolution, not to think of them any more.

A Good Man thus fix'd in his Resolution, by the Strength of his Reason, advances towards his Grave with Joy ; and as in all his Actions he has his Eyes upon God, he is satisfy'd in his own good Success therein, because he sees them approv'd by him, in affording him that Power. 'Tis thus we may be happy without the Assistance of Fortune, in meeting in our irreproachable Life with that solid Tranquillity, we may otherwise look for in vain.

The Remembrance of things past, instructs us in what is to come, and invites us to manage our present Time with so much Conduct, as by the good Use we make thereof, we may enjoy the Fruits of our Repose. Memory being given to Man for his Instruction, a Good Man follows the Rules it gives him, to avoid the same Faults he has committed

mitted before ; and these Precepts will prove the more acceptable to him, the more they tend to his Interest ; because they have no other Object nor End, but his Happiness. He will remember, that all the Pleasures he has enjoy'd, were only imaginary, and like a Dream ; That all the Felicity he has desir'd, could not satisfy his Heart, even when enjoy'd ; because the Enjoyment itself made them less, and that in the midst of all his suppos'd Felicity, he still wish'd for something more, and that the impatient Desire of it, made him forgetful of those Enjoyments. This Truth will lead us naturally to another, *viz.* That we ought to desire nothing besides God himself, to attain to a Happy Life, by entirely committing our selves to his Conduct ; For, if we go on in the Course of our Lives by the Assistances of his Light, we attain to the End of our Desires,

6 *The Happy Life : Or,*

in the same measure as we find them to arise in our Hearts; which will confirm us in that Resolution we had taken, of offering all our Vows on his Altar, in hopes of being heard by him.

'Tis upon these most solid Foundations a true Christian builds his Life, to render himself insensible to the Hopes offer'd by Fortune, and the Enticements of the World; In despising them both, he enjoys that Tranquillity he has acquir'd himself, yet so, as not to forget him, who has given him Ability so to do, by enlightning his Mind, to distinguish Truth from Falsehood, and by enflaming his Desire of taking a firm Resolution to Love the one and Hate the other. Nothing afflicts him, every thing offers him some Consolation, after he has once learn'd that most Precious Art, of drawing some Comfort from those Evils which may befall him : Not but that he is a Man still, and consequently

quently subject to Frailty; but Experience has taught him, That those that tread the Paths of Virtue, never lose Sight of her; because they can never be satisfy'd without seeing her.

Were we truly sensible of the Pleasure of being Virtuous, all our Aversion would be against Vice; if we consider rightly its Ugliness, it will appear to us in so frightful a Shape, that were it not that we have bin acquainted with it from our first years, no Body would follow its Tracts, which are attended by so many Misfortunes. A Vicious Man leads so troublesome a Life, that instead of living, he lingers away his Hours; and let him take never so much Pains, to render it delicious, it is but Labour in vain. Whilst he is bestowing his time in making of Nose-gays, he does not consider, that time makes them fade, even whilst he is gathering the Flowers; and his Contentment

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is of the same Nature, they are but momentaneous. A Flower seems to take her leave of us, so soon as we look upon her; and each Pleasure bids us farewell at the same minute we enjoy it.

All the Misfortunes of our Life came from thence, because we live without thinking; and as it is the same in relation to Death, judge your self of the Irreparableness of the Danger. 'Tis not sufficient to make use of Time as it comes, we must employ it as we ought to do, its Transitoriness puts us upon an unavoidable Necessity of being accountable for the use we have made of it: For, be it to Day, or to Morrow, we must be accountable, and whatever is absolutely necessary, ought always to be in our Thoughts, to improve it whilst present; present Truth perswades our Senses, after having inform'd our Judgment.

I know not how to plead in the least, for those who follow the Foot-steps of such as are fallen before them, since their Fall ought to have bin to them instead of a Light, to enlighten and guide them in the right Path: Not but that Reason was given us for that same Use; but every one reasoning after his own way, those of a weak Capacity are the more unfortunate; because the ill Habie they have contracted, is the whole occasion of all their Disgraces.

If from that Moment a Person is come to an Age of standing no more in need of an Instructor, he will leave off to instruct himself, all the former Instructions will become useless to him; for the last Lesson we receive requires to be supported by others, which give us a true Light, without intermission, in the Path of our Duty; but the Misfortune is, that Youth does not understand this; or if they do, it is so obscurely,

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that.

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that they always take Appearances for Truth. A Young and a Wise Man, is a new thing in Nature ; the only way to be Old, without being arriv'd to an advanc'd Age, is, to consider, as the Merchant does, what Place we are Bound for ; and as our Career ends at the Grave, that Object ought always to be present to our Thoughts, and he that always thinks of Death, shall never die. 'Tis a great Happiness to be Wise before our time ; but the whole Difficulty lies in understanding what is true Wisdom ; and there being no other but the Christian Wisdom, to live like a Christian, is to live like a Wise Man ; the best Maxims of Life, consist in leading a blameless Life. There are as many ways of Living, as there are living Persons ; but every one ought to make Reason his Light, and Duty his Guide ; for unless our Life be enlightned by the first, and guided by

The Contented Man. 11

by the last, we may say it is at its last Gasps; because it is under the continual Pangs of Death to the last Moment. He that leads an ill Life, can't be said to live; being (without in the least receding from Truth) only imaginary, tho' apparent to our Senses; because the nearer it comes to our Senses, the nearer it approaches to Death. We must of Necessity lead a Spiritual Life, if we would be number'd among the Living; those that live only a Bodily Life, die with it, and to their great Misfortune, die for ever. If the World be our only Object, it is also our ultimate End; we may appear in Triumph here below, for some time; nevertheless our Ruin being our Trophy, Earth, which was the Field of our Conquest, becomes our Grave. The only way to render us Happy in this World, is to think, without intermission, of means, how to compass the Felicity of the other;
be-

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because they will last to all Eternity.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

WE have no other Way of attaining to true Happiness, than by taking care to make our Life Happy ; and its Felicity consists in leading a blameless Life, by performing always our Duty.

We must make this Maxim the Object of our Thoughts and Actions, if we propose to find out that solid Tranquillity, so much search'd after by all the World.

The Path of Justice leads us to true Felicity, all the other Ways carry us so far astray, that by degrees we quite lose sight of it, and leave us nothing but an imaginary Notion, which passes away like a Dream.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

*Wherein consists the Tranquillity of
Life.*

EVERY one goes in search after Tranquillity, and scarce any Body overtakes it ; we need not wonder at it, every one looks for it without himself, when 'tis not to be met with but within himself. The Tranquillity of the Soul makes the Tranquillity of our Life ; 'tis on account of our Consciences, we may call our selves Happy ; Repose and Disquiet are the Causes of our Felicity and Infelicity. You may long enough search for the Art of Contentment in Nature, all the Precepts taken from thence are contradicted by Experience, which makes us feel the contrary of what is taught us by the other.

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We know Men in this World to be proof enough to pursue their Pleasures ; but, as the Roses they gather, wither under their Hands, whilst the thorny Prickles remain in their Soul, they dare not put into an equal Ballance the Pleasure they have felt, with the Pain that attended it ; Because, this last, in effect, overwhelm'd their Hearts with a real Bitterness, whilst the Sweets of the other charm'd their Senses only in outward Appearance.

What a strange Life is it, to live without making use of our Reason ! No sooner Reason takes place, but we trace in vain the very Remembrance of past Pleasures ; the Idea that remains thereof being so weak, that we scarce know whether they were real or not. Be our Pleasures never so sweet, if our Soul feels some Pain thereat, they are chang'd into Bitterness ; our Mind can't be satisfy'd, unless our Conscience is at Ease : And its Inquietude
is

is of such a Nature, as to make us sensible of the Falsity of our own Sentiments. As long as our Memory is fill'd up with the Horrour of our own Crimes, our Heart is not in a Capacity of relishing the Enjoyment of our Prosperities. If we should see our selves in the Possession even of all we could wish for, yet there still remains a certain *Vacuum* in the Heart ; the Enjoyment of our Desires gives Birth to new ones, which occasion fresh Inquietudes in us ; so, that Hopes is the only Pledge of our Repose, to render us the more Miserable.

The most soveraign Remedy against this Evil, is, to be Contented with what we have, being instructed by a happy Experience, that we never wanted what was necessary. We ought to consider, that it is the Justice of our Prayers, that makes us hope for the Certainty of Success ; because this Justice it self, is an uninterrupted Prayer to Heaven, whose Assistance

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ance is the more infallible, because it makes its Application to what is infinitely Merciful. We must not advise with the World, to be instructed in the Way of living in it with Content ; for, she having nothing to propose to us, but false Pleasures, her Councils must needs turn to our Detriment : Experience may so easily convince us in this Point, that we need not any further to enlarge upon it. Let our Fortune be never so well settled, it will never be solid, but in outward Appearance, unless it has Justice for its Foundation ; this Piece of Workmanship must owe its Origin there, our Strength being too weak to bring it to a happy Conclusion : 'Tis true, we may lend her a helping Hand ; but this is only in preparing the Matter, 'tis She that must give it the true Form.

'Tis in vain for the most fortunate in this World, to imagine themselves so to be, because they
are

are ignorant of the Cause of their good Fortune : We must look for true Felicity in Heaven, 'tis there alone we may get Sight of her ; and, as the true Light can't shine in our Souls, if they want Purity to preserve its Lustre, we can't expect to be Happy, but according to the Measure of our Innocence. Innocence and Felicity go Hand in Hand ; whence it is evident, that the Tranquillity of Mind makes the Tranquillity of our Life ; and that, if we intend to taste the Sweets thereof, we must submit to her Censure, to justify our Actions in God's Eyes, as well as in those of the World, he being the Chief Judge thereof. True and Solid Virtue has this Qualification belonging to it, that it makes us at once cast our Eyes both towards Heaven and Earth ; to Heaven, for its Felicity, by adhering to the Rules of Righteousness ; to Earth, to render our Dwelling most delicious to us, by sub-

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submitting our selves without Murmuring, to those Laws we find establish'd there.

'Tis sufficient for a Soul truly Christian, to know its Duty, to make it perform it ; its Inducements are so powerful, that it seems as if they were not made free, because they prove irresistible, every thing must give way to it ; nay, even when Self-love sits as President in the Council, they only change the Object, by proposing to us Eternity, instead of a transitory Time.

No Man could ever attain to any more than an imaginary Happiness, if a good Life did not produce that Felicity : I mean, a Man can't approach to his Grave, but by those means, Voluptuousness herself has mark'd out for him ; for, he would not be sensible of his wandering in the true Path, unless he knew he had gone astray from it ; and, as this Knowledge must needs alarm all the Faculties of his Soul,

The Contented Man. 19

Soul, judge of his Pain by his Fear, and of this Fear by his Object, the Damage may be irreparable. Let him flatter himself at pleasure to Day, to Morrow he will talk at a far different rate; the Language of Conscience is so full of Eloquence, as to convince the most incredulous.

Not, but that there are some that are voluntarily Blind, and maliciously Obstinate; but, time will break through that Cataract of Blindness, and the most obstinate give way to the Force of Examples, tho' they will hold out against that of Reason. Those that fall before our Eyes, instruct us by their Fall; and by an Excess of good Fortune, their useless Complaints prove useful to us, when through our Ears they penetrate into our Mind, after having convinc'd our Senses.

It being necessary to lead a good Life, to make our selves Happy; our Felicity must be the greater,
be-

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because, we are constrain'd by so agreeable a Necessity. Can any thing be more delicious, than to conform to a Law which enjoins us to search for our Felicity in treading the Paths of Virtue? 'Tis She that freely gives it, our own Sentiments convince us of it, and She requires no other Witness, because they should be beyond all Exception. Never did any Man repent of a good Action; and our Hearts never knew what Sighing was, till that fatal Moment when they began to think of committing Evil. *Cain* was the first Criminal, *Cain* was the first unfortunate Man, his Jealousie caus'd his dreadful Crime, and the Horror of his Crime, his everlasting Inquietude: The same Moment he lost his Innocence, he lost also his Tranquility; and his Conscience putting him in continual Remembrance of his Sin, prov'd his constant Tormentor.

Most

The Contented Man. 21

Most adorable Justice! whose Omnipotent all revenging Arm, tho' invisible, proves the more dreadful and heavy, the more it is hidden from our Eyes; and which admits of no Cure of the Wounds it gives, but what comes from Repentance.

We seek for our Repose here below, after great Fatigues; As this is in reference to the Body, so we must study no less that of the Soul, to deliver it from its Inquietudes. This is that Repose the World is not able to give, it being a Weakness, so much as only to look for it there; nay, it would produce a fresh Inquietude so much as to think of it there; the Thought it self proves the Weakness of him who conceiv'd it. Those that take a great deal of Pains in finding out the Terrestrial Paradise, meet instead thereof with Hell they look'd not for, by the Pain they feel in having so ill bestow'd their time. 'Tis the same

22 *The Happy Life: Or,*

same with those that seek for Tranquillity in this World, which being no where to be found but in God, 'tis He alone that can give it. Voluptuousness may promise it to its Admirers, but they taste no more of the real Pleasures than those that are over-eager in following the Chace; they out-run themselves so far in their pleasing and deceitful Imaginations, that they are founde'r'd before they come half way, and overwhelm'd with Shame and Confusion, regret in vain their Misfortune at the last Gasp of their Miserable Lives, or perhaps die in Despair. Fortune flatters the Ambitious with Hopes of Tranquillity; but they die in Hopes, because She is not able to put them in Possession of what she promis'd. The Miser looks for it in his Riches; but their constant Desire of acquiring more, being a Torment to which they are condemn'd, their Enjoyment proves their Martyrdom, and they are still

still always in Search of the same Pleasure.

'Tis a great piece of Frailty for a Man to look for his Tranquillity in the indulging of his irregular Desires, without considering by the Faith of past Experience, whether he has not bin deceiv'd in his Opinion before, as often as he thought he had found it there. Our Remembrance will justify our Doubt upon that score, because from what is past, we may judge what that which is present is likely to afford us, *viz.* No more than an imaginary Tranquillity, and the present gives us sufficient Reason to mistrust what is to come. Who can deny such a Truth, which is so convincing even to our Senses at every moment? And the continual Experience of a Truth of this nature, will not suffer any one that will never so little hearken to Reason, to be so weak as to doubt of it. To enjoy Tranquillity in a Place,
where

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where never any such thing was known, a Man must have lost the use of his Reason, before he can as much as begin to imagine it. The World containing but an imaginary Tranquillity, from thence it is, that we cannot meet with it here, but in our Imagination; and God's Justice, which pursues us where-ever we go, will even not permit us to enjoy that imaginary Tranquillity, as long as our Conscience is disturb'd; the Remorses of which, prove a continual Disturbance to that Repose we look for. A Man makes a very mean use of his Reason, who can believe, that there can be any real Tranquillity without Reason; and it is she, that teaches us, how much in vain it is to look for it in a Life, which lies under a daily Reproach of passing its time away without Profit. If we turn not constantly our Eyes towards Eternity in time, everlasting Vexation and Troubles will be our Doom hereafter.

MORAL

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

OUR Tranquillity consists in a good Life. That very moment we grow slack in our Duty, we fall into Confusion and Disorder; and if we are ignorant of both, this Ignorance is the first Chastisement of our Sins.

Those who look for the Tranquillity of Life any where but in their Innocence, will only encrease their own Inquietudes in spending their Time in vain; I wonder People should be mistaken in a Truth, the daily Experience whereof makes it obvious to all.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

The Pains we take in obtaining Tranquillity, give us beforehand, a Taste of its Sweetness.

Since then, we are convinc'd that a good Life is always attended with Happiness, 'tis our fault, if we are not happy, because 'tis in our Power (by God's Grace) to lead a good Life. Can any thing be more delicious, than to make our own Garlands ? This Work is the more agreeable, because we are both the Object and End of it. What a Pleasure is it to search without Intermission, after Means of our own Content ! What a Happiness to find out a Way to shelter our selves against the Attempts of Fortune ! And how Glorious is it, to live without Reproach, that we may dye without Regret ! All these things we shall be Possessors of,

The Contented Man. 27

of, after we have found that Tran-
quillity, which all the World looks
for : But to attain to it, we must
walk in the Path of Righteousness,
this being the only Way that leads
to Heaven, and all the rest are at-
tended with direful and fatal Con-
sequences. Unhappy is the Man,
who shutting the Eyes of his Body
against undeniable Experience, and
those of his Soul, against the Light
of Reason, takes, in this most dif-
ficult Career betwixt this Time
and Eternity, his Passions for his
Guides, because his Blindness will
attend him for ever.

Pursuant to the unshaken funda-
mental Maxims of these undoubted
Truths, every one in his Station,
ought to chalk out the Road of
his Life, according to the Light of
Reason, without any other Guide
but his Duty. If the Road seems
to him too heavy and difficult, let
him nevertheless move forward,
for Fear he should lose his time;
for what must be, ought to be

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done with a good Heart. The year has Four Seasons, and each Season its proper Fruits ; but the World has but one, where you see a constant Intermixture of Good and Evil. If a Man be Contented to Day, to Morrow some ill News or other may disturb his Satisfaction ; But when we our selves are employ'd in procuring our Felicity, in establishing the Tranquillity of our Mind, during the course of our Life, we shall see all the Storms and Tempests rather underneath our Feet than above our Heads, because we are exalted in a Region of Calm and Serenity, and, if we hear now and then a Thunder-clap, it sounds to us like an agreeable Harmony. He that looks for Content, must look for Innocence ; for those that fly from one, will never obtain the other.

A sinful Man is always unfortunate, because his Trespas proves his Disgrace. He may fill his
Coffers

The Contented Man. 29

Coffers with Gold, but Tranquillity is not to be bought for Money. He may attain to worldly Grandure, but that will not furnish him with a true Repose; and whatever he may boast, this false Lustre serves only to fill his Soul with Confusion and Shame. I own, that an ill Man has some fair Days in his Life; but these are at the best but Winter-days, which threaten Storms and Rains. I believe also, that by the Strength of his Mind he may meet with some lucid Intervals in his Pain, after his Voluptuousness; But the sweets of all his Pleasures, being in their present Enjoyment, because they lose their relish as soon as they are tasted, judge of his Felicity by his own Happiness it self. And this is the true Way to discover the Vanity of all our Pleasures, since even the greatest of them which arise in the Imagination of the Person that conceives them, vanish as soon as he is be-

30 *The Happy Life: Or,*

come sensible of them. As nothing is more certain in this World than Death, so nothing is more obvious than the false Notions of our Pleasures; the Delights which attend them, only touch our Senses; whilst the Pain that ensues, remains everlasting in our Memory.

Our Streets furnish us every Day with Examples of such like old Sinners, who, after being tired out in hunting after Pleasures, so as to be able to stir no longer, lead so doleful and so languishing a Life for the remainder of their miserable Days, as is enough to raise in others both Horrour and Compassion. This is the Fate of those Sons of Voluptuousness: But it seems very strange, that so vast a number of miserable Persons which owe their Ruin daily to her Enticements, should not be prevailing enough upon those who still take the same Course, to look backwards, and chuse a better Path, since

The Contented Man. 31

since that they walk upon leads them to their Destruction.

When a Man once makes due Reflections, that all the Taste of past Pleasures is gone, and that it will be the same with those he is likely to enjoy, and that at the End of his Life, he shall have nothing but a melancholly Remembrance of what he has bin, I wonder that this Reflection, which has Self-love for its Object, should not induce, not oblige, no not force a Man to change the Course of his Life here, to live to Eternity; whereas he lives only to die an everlasting Death.

'Tis not Riches which make us happy, but the good Use we make of them. 'Tis not humane Grandure that can procure our Tranquillity, but rather the slighting of them; neither will Dignities add any thing to the Happiness of our Life, unless it be by the Good we do to the People, and acting according to our Duty. *Vertue* has
C 4 the

32 *The Happy Life: Or,*

the Preference to all the Treasures upon Earth: *Craſus* was forc'd to confeſs it with his own Mouth, to the eternal Praise of *Solon*. He, who deſpiſes worldly Grandure, is above all the Greatneſs of the World: *Diogenes* in his Wine-pipe extorted this Confeſſion from *Alexander the Great*. Let our Fortune be exalted to the higheſt pitch of Greatneſs, *Marius*, who had bin ſeven times Conſul of *Rome*, marching triumphantly thro' the Cities of that City, as a Conqueror, and afterwards appearing as a Beggar at *Athens*, furniſhes us with an undeniable Example in his own Perſon, that all the Glory of the World is nothing but Vanity.

'Tis Vertue that makes us truly Rich, becauſe it procures us Tranquillity; 'tis She that make us truly great, becauſe She makes us really happy. 'Tis ſhe that loads us with Honours, becauſe ſhe fills our Hearts with Satisfaction; we need but love Her, and we will certainly

The Contented Man. 33

certainly follow Her; and we need only follow Her to make us happy, for in treading in Her Steps, we shall wish for nothing else but Her self. O What a Satisfaction is it, to make tryal of it! and to remove all doubt concerning it: We need only conceive a Desire for Her, because, as this Desire contains some Part of the Agreeableness of its Object, it creates so much Satisfaction in the Heart, where it took its rise, that it determines the Will, and this Will thus determinated, makes the first beginning of our Happiness. Virtue, when put in Practise, is like a sweet-scented Balsam, which communicates its odoriferous Scent in an instant, to those that only touch it. 'Tis impossible we should as much as wish for the Possession of what is *Good*, without feeling our Soul fill'd with the *Good* it self; the Sweetness that is inseparably annex'd to this Desire, is a part of the thing it self. It belongs to

34 *The Happy Life: Or,*

God alone, to reward with an *Infinite Good*, the very Will of Well-doing, and to fill our Hearts with so much Joy at that very Moment we only conceive the first Thought, so that our Will is the very Beginning of our Felicity. There was never a Man who apply'd himself to doing his Duty, but what foresaw, and foreknew the Happiness that was to attend him in the pursuit thereof. Christians have this Advantage, to find Sweetness in Bitterness, and Pleasure in their Pains. The Troubles we undergo for God's sake, change their Names with their Nature; the Joys we feel, contradict the outward Appearances of Pain. A Soul which has no other Object but what is *Good*, the Satisfaction She feels in the constant pursuit thereof, and in keeping it always in View, renders her insensible to all the Evils of the World: I mean, provided she has only the Will of pursuing it; for this Will being crown'd by

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by God's Mercy, He makes her taste the Sweets of it beforehand. What an Advantage is it for us Mortals to see our Desires rewarded as well as our Actions! The very first Moment of doing our Endeavours, makes us feel the Satisfaction which we could not expect but at the Conclusion. Is it not a great Happiness to see our selves at the End of our Career, at the same Moment we take a Resolution of beginning it? As the Resolution we take, furnishes us with matter to know the true Value of what we may expect, so the same Resolution which makes us deserve it, makes us attain to it, before we are in actual Possession of it, by the infallible Hopes it gives us of being put in Possession of it.

Good has this peculiar to it self, that it bears Flowers in our Heart as soon as it is sowed; and these Flowers so perfume it with their odoriferous Scent, that every thing else seems nauseous to it. 'Tis very well worth our enquiring into the
Trial

36 *The Happy Life : Or,*

Trial of this Truth. Never had a Man a passionate Love for what is *Good*, but his Life was a Comfort to him ; his Love making up all its Felicities. 'Tis in vain to look for them among those different Objects, which inveigle our Senses, they are deceiv'd every Moment ; these Felicities contradict themselves, and the Person is doubtful of their true Relish, whilst he tastes them. There are no true Felicities but those which are found in the Love of what is *Good* ; if any one is so weak as to doubt of it, let him but love her for one Moment, and his Love will last for ever : Not to prove what is so advantageous to us, would be an unpardonable Neglect : If any one is not convinc'd, that there is a great deal of Satisfaction in doing *Good*, let him but take a firm Resolution, and that alone will remove all his Doubts. 'Tis thus, an incredulous Man may see himself at last convinc'd of his voluntary
Malice

Malice and Blindness : But he covers his Eyes with a Band, because he would not see himself oblig'd to turn back, if he should be made sensible that the Path he walks in leads to his Destruction. Can any thing be more proficuous to a Patient, than to make trial of an infallible Remedy ? What can a Man wish for better, who has lost his Way, than to meet with a good Guide to bring him into the right Path ? A Soul entangled in the pursuit of her Evil Inclinations, can't wish for a greater Happiness, than this charitable Council I give her, to determine her self to the pursuit of what is *Good*, and entertain her self with this agreeable Thought, to be made sensible beforehand of a much greater Share of Satisfaction than Apprehension of Pain. What is *Good* is not only to be wish'd for upon its own Account, and by the Sweets that belong to it, but it renders it self the more aimable, by how
much

38 *The Happy Life : Or,*

much it makes us hate every thing that is foreign to it ; the whole Difficulty lies in knowing it, because to Know and Love her is the same thing ; those that know her love her ; and those that love her, never become unfaithful ; all her Lovers die Constant, to live to Eternity, because 'tis Good it self that renders their Lives everlasting.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

TIS an undoubted Truth, that God would have it so, that the Good we do, should afford us the true Sense thereof, to serve us as a Reward at the same time we do it ; and by the same Act of his most adorable Mercy, he has bestow'd a Memory upon us, that after we have done, the Remembrance thereof should remain as a further Recompence to us.

He

The Contented Man. 39

He that determins himself to pursue Vertue, the Satisfaction of following her, makes him not sensible of the troubles he meets with. And, as he can't love her but with Excess, so his Enjoyments will be proportionable to his Love.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

*'Tis impossible to live Contentedly,
unless our Consciences be at Repose.*

TH O' most commonly our Senses will not be convinced by any thing else but by themselves, nevertheless they do not always submit to Experience; and after our Mind is overcome by Reason, it is very often not strong enough to triumph over them. 'Tis our Consciences that keeps our Hearts under the Torments of Hell, to make them confess the Evils they have committed; because otherwise they strive rather to be Insensible than Repenting; and, tho' our Souls sufficiently detect their Blindness, to convince them how far they are deviated from the right Path, they go on the same Way, without considering that the Tract they follow leads to their Destruction. In this miser-

miserable State unto which the obstinate Sinner has wilfully reduced himself by his irregular Life and Conduct, God's Justice appears no less surprizing than his Mercy, which makes him to punish the Sinner with continual Inquietudes, to oblige him to desire that Tranquillity he has lost.

'Tis in vain for him to look for it in good Company, the most pleasant is not sufficient to divert him; and, if he meets with any Satisfaction there, what the first moment gives him, is taken away by the second, it lasts but a short while. His Pleasure-houses seem agreeable to all the World except to himself, because he sees in his Garden the same prickly Fruits that stick in his Soul; and if the Orange-flowers on both sides of the Walks perfume the circumambient Air, the Wind which accompanies his Sighs disperses the agreeable Scent before it reaches his Nostrils. The sweet singing of the Birds comes
to

42 *The Happy Life: Or,*

to his Ears, but without diverting his Mind; and when he sees the Spring flowing without Intermision, it puts him in Mind, that his Punishment will be everlasting, as well as his Pain. The Bitterness he tastes, and the Thorns he feels in his Soul, make him insensible of the Enjoyments of his Feasts; his Taste is such as not to distinguish the Meats that are served up at his Table, because he cannot relish them. His outward Appearance of Prosperity causes him much Envy, whilst he, sensible of his own Misery, envies the Condition of the most miserable; every one admires him, standing on the Pinnacle of Fortune, whilst he trembles with Horrour, as often as he thinks by what Means he ascended to this Pitch of Grandure. He is beloved, he is esteemed, but those that love him don't know him; and, because he knows himself too well, he thinks he can't hate himself too much; the Remembrance of his Crimes,

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Crimes, is the Object of his Hatred; and the Esteem that is shewn him, justifies his Scorn for it, because this is founded upon as solid a Basis as the other is imaginary. He is very Rich, but his Riches are ill gotten; he lives in great Credit, but makes ill use of it; His Children he sees in the greatest Employments of the Kingdom, but he has purchased them with other Mens Goods; he has every thing according to his Wish, but can't attain to that Tranquillity he so much desires.

In this miserable Condition whereunto he sees himself reduced, he goes in Search after himself, without finding himself; he is happy in every thing but in his Soul, which is tormented with perpetual Inquietudes; and it is in this that God's Justice appears to us again most adorable, by making its Power to be felt in all those Hearts that will not submit to it, and by punishing, by sensible Punishments, those

44 *The Happy Life*: Or,

those Crimes that had escaped the knowledge of Men. 'Tis impossible to separate the Pain from the Crime, after it has bin committed; we are sensible of the Punishment, without seeing the Hand that chastises us; and this Punishment being without Intermission, proves the heavier upon us. It follows us every where, because he that inflicts it is in every Place; whence it is evident, that the same God, who is both Omnipotent and Just, does concern himself thus far in our Crimes, as to punish them; For we find our selves afflicted with a sort of Pain unknown to Nature, and consequently such a one as is incurable; we groan under an Evil that has no Name, because it should prove so much the more difficult to us to find a Remedy against it, as our Blindness has taken from us even the Will of looking after it.

There is no *Medium* betwixt an ill and a good Life; God gives nothing

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thing but everlasting Felicities or Torments, and these must be suffered for our Vices, as the other are the Consequences of the Love of Vertue; A Man must have an Aversion to himself, who would not prefer a present and everlasting Satisfaction, to a present and eternal Punishment. Whatever Good or Evil we do, appears before God's Tribunal, either for its Reward or Punishment. Hence it is, that the Innocent enjoy that Tranquillity they procure to themselves, by that Grace that attends them; as the Guilty feel all the Evils they have committed, by the Torments that ensue upon them. If a Criminal's Life may be call'd a Life at all, it must be like a Sleep or Dream, because the Spirit that animates it, has no other Vertue to operate there, but what proceeds from bare Imagination; and seeing God's Justice never ceases, the Criminal feels even whilst asleep, the Torments of his Crimes; because, by
God's

46 *The Happy Life: Or,*

God's Permission, the Terroures he feels in his Dreams, are at once his Tyrant, his Executioner and Punishment. But, let that Lethargy into which we are thrown by our Sins, be never so deep, never so dreadful, a Man must not be himself, if he be insensible of the Pains that attends it; because, it has a more near Relation to the Soul, than the Shade has to the Body.

I am at a Loss to understand that, if it be true, that bodily Health is preferable to all other things in the World; how a Man is able to suffer the Inquietudes of the Mind, being the most insupportable Disease of the Soul that can be thought of: For, you die, without dying every Moment, and the Disease is incurable, because that, tho' we know the Cause thereof, yet this very Knowledge, by way of a new Chastisement, does not incline our Will to undergo the Cure.

What a miserable Life is it, when our Remembrance loads us daily
with

with Reproaches! You dare not think of what is past; what is present astonishes you, and what is to come only serves to create Fear in you; so that, like the damn'd in Hell, you are not a Moment without feeling your Punishment.

The only Way is, to give place to Reason and Truth; there can be no Pleasure in feeling the Effects of a disturb'd Conscience; there is no Comparison betwixt the Inquietudes of Mind and the Delights of our Senses, the strongest will be uppermost: Health, Riches and Honours, can't charm away the Pains of a Man blacken'd with Crimes: What good does his Health do him? his Heart never enjoys it; the Air he breaths is loaden with Sighs at the Remembrance of the Evils he has committed: His Riches stand him in no stead for the Recovery of that Tranquillity he has lost: And as to his Honours, tho' many pay their Prayers and Vows to him, he sees Incense offer'd

48 *The Happy Life : Or,*

fer'd on the same Altar where-
of he is the Victim. All this obli-
ges us to confess and to lay it down
as a Maxim founded more upon Rea-
son than Knowledge, That it is im-
possible to lead a Contented Life,
without our Conscience be at Re-
pose. I don't suppose any one will
go about to object against it, be-
cause it is conclusive in it self ;
and whatever Objections may be
made against it, will serve only
to prove the Weakness of their
Authors.

'Tis agreed by all the World,
That the Great Creator of Man-
kind, has ingrafted the Desire of
turning his Eyes upon him so deep-
ly into his Nature, that it is no
wonder, if he endeavours to find
him at all times, his Presence alone,
having the Power of procuring his
Contentment. We cannot expect
him to be present in our Hearts, un-
less it be by the Innocence of our
Souls ; 'tis this heavenly Sun, which
by his miraculous Rays, not only
makes

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makes us admire in him all the Beauties of the World, but also renders us incapable of discerning any thing that is beautiful without him. Our Imagination, which seems so fruitful to invent Means for our Content, becomes barren, when it considers how to succeed in them, unless it makes God the whole Object of every thing, my meaning is, if we will see our Desires accomplish'd, and our Hopes terminated ; Because, whatever we may desire or hope for else, can't make us happy but for a Moment, the next following, being attended with Inquietudes. What sort of a Tranquillity can we promise to our selves in this World ? Its Conquerors have even despis'd the Conquest thereof ; I mean, Let us taste all its Pleasures, Let us get into the Possession of all its Felicities , they are both of Necessity imaginary ; all their Being subsists only in our Imagination. The Greatest Man in the World, had he a Compass where-

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with

50 *The Happy Life : Or,*

with to measure his Grandure, would find himself so Little, that he would soon lay down his Titles; and the Rich Man would call himself Poor, were he truly acquainted with the Nature of his Riches; he would despise the Pleasures of Possessing them, and bemoan the Time he had spent in heaping them up. If our Industry alone is employ'd in finding out our Tranquillity, you will never see the Work at an End; the Workman will never be out of his Apprenticeship, and the Materials he works upon are not worth the Fashioning; his vain Endeavours equally convince him of the Vanity of his Desires, and us of the Vanity of our Hopes. 'Tis our Conscience, that must serve us like a Marine-Compass in this Ocean of the World, to forewarn us of the Danger we are in, and direct us to the Port we intend to find out. 'Tis our Conscience, that gives us Notice of the impending Storm, by
its

The Contented Man. 51

its Inquietude, as well as of the approaching Calm, by its Tranquillity; and without consulting our Conscience at every turn, we shall never be fully satisfy'd in the true Condition of our Life.

I know not what Excuse can be made, for the Curiosity of those who consult the Stars, to learn from them their good or evil Destiny; I am sure our Conscience is able to instruct us much better than they: As that is the cause of all our Tranquillity, and all our Inquietudes, and, that from these two arise all our Good or Evil, 'tis sufficient to consult its Oracles, which are the more infallible, because our own Sentiments are the Interpreters of them. The Advantage we shall reap in so doing, will be, that Conscience never proves deceitful to us, nor can be deceiv'd by any. Our Senses are its Evidences, which being unapproachable, who can resist or abide its Censures? Our Memory repre-

52 *The Happy Life : Or,*

sents to us the Crimes laid to our charge, and the ensuing Pain is sufficient to convince us of our being convicted. Every one enjoys what Tranquillity he procures to himself, he must hope for no other; and as often as he looks for it except within himself, he loses his Labour in his Search. A wise Christian is not subject to this Danger; As he labours without Intermission, to attain to his own Felicity, so he enjoys beforehand the Fruits of his Labour, by making himself a temporal Crown here, till he may receive another in Heaven.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

TIS beyond all Doubt, that, to live in Content, our Conscience must be at Ease, and, those who maintain the contrary, are blinded by their own Opinions. They can't deny, but that the doleful Remembrance of
their

The Contented Man. 53

their past Pleasures, and the Pain that ensues, cannot stand in Competition with the Enjoyments that attended them, because this last is no more in Being, unless it be in their Imaginations; whereas the others make themselves to be felt in the very Center of their Bowels.

A Good Life is the first Foundation-stone of its Tranquillity; and this Maxim is the more infallible, as much as it at once convinces both our Mind and Senses.

Health, Youth, Riches, Favours, can't make a Man sensible that he is Happy, unless Conscience also tells him so.

'Tis in vain, to carry on Matters with a good Countenance; we may struggle hard, to conceal for any considerable time, a continual Pain, for the more it is conceal'd, the more it encreases.

54 The Happy Life: Or,

Notwithstanding outward Appearance often resembles Truth, Truth never changes its Nature, and is always the same; and the Words of being Criminal and Unhappy, being the same thing, in effect, there is no Distinction betwixt Misfortune and a Crime. Which obliges us to confess, That the most solid Tranquillity and true Felicity, is no where to be met with, but in an Innocent Life; because we are taught by Christian Philosophy, that our Trespases are the only real Misfortunes that can befall us.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

We must conform our selves to the Will of God, if we intend to live in Tranquillity.

'T IS not enough to conform our Will to God's Will, because it must be so, our Submission ought to supply that Necessity. We can't with sufficient Respect submit to those Laws he imposes upon us, tho' they seem somewhat rigorous, our Obedience will take off the Edge, and Reason will correct all their Bitterness. As Love makes evil things appear agreeable to our Eyes; we must with the same Eyes look upon those soveraign Commands that are given us, to proportion the Satisfaction of obeying them to the Honour of receiving them. The greatest Respect we can pay to God, is that of a continual Submission to his most adorable Will, without enquiring into the Reason

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56 *The Happy Life: Or,*

thereof : The Sacrifice of a submissive Soul, is rewarded by his eternal Decrees, being the most Beautiful Victim that can be offer'd to him. The very Character of being a Creature, imposes upon us the Law of Obedience, which Justice, with its own Hands, has engraven on our Hearts, because we should never lose the Remembrance of it. 'Tis this blind Obedience, which is able here upon Earth, to procure both our Tranquillity and Felicity. There is scarce a worldly Judge, but what could wish his Judgments to be irrevocable and beyond Appeal, And should not the Orders of Providence be inviolable ?

The Authority of God over his Creatures, is far superior to that of a King over his Subjects ; if Reason approves of the sovereign Authority of the last, judge you, whether the Law of Nature, ought not to justify the absolute independent Power of her Creator ?

But

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But in all this way of arguing, Love must have her Share; that so she may duly weigh the justice of our Duty. A Heart full of the Love of God, never makes use of complaining Expressions, but always speaks of Thankfulness; and tho' it sighs without Intermission, its Sighs are the Products of Joy, occasion'd by the Remembrance of the many Favours it has receiv'd, or by the Regret it feels, of having committed some Trespases.

Since every thing that happens on Earth is concerted in Heaven, we ought from thence to accept with the same Hand, and with the same Countenance, as well our Felicities, as Misfortunes; considering, for our Comfort, that the last are drawn upon us by our Sins; and for our Instruction, that the first are such Favours as never alter their Nature, tho' we can't challenge them by our Merits. What is it we need to fear in this World, under His Protection, who has

58 *The Happy Life: Or,*

created it? Do you dread Fortune?
Is it not He, that moves the Wheel?
Fear you Poverty? All the Treasures
of the World are in His Hands;
Are you dissatisfy'd with your
Exilement? He is present in all
Places; Do the Pains you suffer,
afflict you to a high Degree? He
has made the first Trial of their
Bitterness; and, if Death appears
to us in its dreadful Shape, we
forget, that He himself submitted
to the same Law he laid upon us.
I don't wonder, that Love should
be so Victorious where-ever it
comes, 'tis enough to know how
to love, to conquer every thing.

Job draws me into Admiration,
when overwhelm'd with the heavy
Burthen of his Afflictions, he
makes these heavenly Words re-
found to the very Gates of Hell,
God's Will be done: The Messenger
who brought him the doleful News,
That his Children were bury'd
under the Ruins of a House, was
much more surpriz'd than himself:
When

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When they bring him Advice of the Loss of his Flocks, in the Presence of his Wife, who, to add to his Affliction, instead of commending his Patience, entices him to Despair; his Heart like a Rock in the midst of the Waters, stands immoveable within it self against all these Efforts; and his Soul, which has no other Object but God alone, looks upon him without Intermiſſion. He takes Delight in ſeeing his Body cover'd all over with Ulcers, which reach to the very Bones, after they had corroded his Fleſh; becauſe, knowing he was ſown in Corruption to ariſe again in Glory, he takes his Conſolation from that very Evil which afflicted him, not opening his Mouth, but when he utter'd theſe heavenly Words, *The Lord's Will be done.* Our Hearts muſt needs be touch'd with theſe charming Words, becauſe they had power enough to charm his Enemies.

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60 *The Happy Life : Or,*

What a Pleasure is it to be in a Condition, to change the Bitterness of our Troubles into Sweetness, by striving to act in Concert with this Illustrious Patience, in regard to his Master! he praises his Justice, without being conscious to himself of any Crimes ; his Conscience reproaches him not with any. I can't but perswade my self, that the Misfortune he saw himself reduc'd to, being like a Lookinglass which flatters not the Beholders, and wherein he saw the true Condition of his Miseries, made him then fall in love with himself, whilst he was looking into it, because it made him appear the more acceptable before God, the more he humbled himself before him. O what a surprizing Sight! I am apt to believe, had the Sun had Ears, as well as he has Eyes, he would have stop'd in the midst of his Career, to have heard him sing his *Miserere*, after having contemplated

templated his Constancy under the frightful Shape of an agonizing Person. All the Devils were his Tyrants, and all the Angels his Admirers : The Earth was the Theater of his Sufferings, and the Heaven a Witness of his Glory. All the World cast their Eyes upon him, to afflict and despise him ; but his Eyes were fix'd only on God, to comfort himself in praising him : If Nature happen'd to draw some Complaints from his Mouth, his Heart contradicted every thing it utter'd, and sigh'd for Joy, in the midst of his most tormenting Pains.

'Tis in this manner a true Christian Soul bears to the very last Minute of his Life, the heavy Burthen of his Troubles, without murmuring or breaking out into Complaints, always rather looking upon the Hand that inflicts the Punishment, than the Pains he endures. At the same Moment we re-deliver to God that Empire

62 *The Happy Life : Or,*

pire He has given to our Will, in submitting it to His, we become the more happy; in that we look for our Felicity from Him alone, because all our Wishes are terminated in Him alone. How happy is that Man whose Will is confin'd to God's Will, in order to be happy for ever ! How unhappy is he who follows his own Will, to render himself miserable to all Eternity ! How glorious is it, to deny every thing to our Desires here below, to acquire what is above ; The only *Good* that is desirable ! And how preposterous is it, to grant every thing in this World to our Will, to feel all the Evils that can be imagin'd, in the next ! Let us therefore not doubt any longer of our Felicity ; let us draw this infallable Conclusion from the Premises, that, to meet with the true Tranquillity of Life, we must conform our Will to God's Will ; We can never offer him a more agreeable Sacrifice, than that of our Will, by submitting it to
His,

His, which being never unjust, we trace, by following it, the true Path of Justice.

All our Designs of rendring our selves happy will prove fruitless, unless we make the first Offerings of our Thoughts to God, since, 'tis according to his Will, the Success will prove either for or against us: And, if we consider his Will in every thing as our End, after having first made it our chief Object, we need seek for nothing, either from Time or Fortune, since all our Good or Evil is in the hand of him, who has the Disposal of them. 'Tis he himself who teaches us to glorify him in accomplishing his Will both in Heaven and on Earth; and we can give him no other Proof of our Zeal in this point, than by submitting our Wills to his absolute Commands. 'Tis *Tertullian's* opinion, that such as conform their Wills to God's Will, in so doing render themselves Masters both of Time and Fortune, so that they can't be
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64 *The Happy Life: Or,*

surprized by the first, nor afflicted by the last. 'Tis in vain for a Man to indulge his own Will, it is as changeable as his Heart; his Desires have no Relish in what is present, because they despise what they are in Possession of, and long after what is to come, wishing every Day for new Pleasures, and no sooner has Fortune bestow'd them upon them, but they load them. This teaches us to look in God for every thing we desire, whereby our Desire will revive for ever in its Object, and become immortal. All the Wishes which owe their Birth to our selves, die along with us, because the Heart, from whence they spring, is as perishable as they; the only Way to alter their Nature, is, to desire nothing but *Good*, which as it will be the constant Object of our Desires in this, so it will be our Reward in the next World. Among all God's great Mercies, I know none beyond that which disposes our Wills always to
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conform to His; And, there being no real Tranquillity but what we receive at his Hands, we enjoy, beforehand the pleasures of Paradise, promised to us, by rendring, I say, our Will altogether conformable to his; because thus our Hearts lay an unshaken Foundation of their Submission, in that entire Submission to him. Pleasure having no other Object than *Good*, and God being the *Sovereign Good* of our Souls, 'tis in Effect to wish ones own Happiness to submit to his Will, which makes our Felicity as lasting as our Submission, because 'tis she alone that can make it so. When our Desires are such as are agreeable to God's Will, we desire nothing but Him, because 'tis his Will to bestow his Glory upon us, which is actually inseparable from himself. What is it we can wish for more, when we have God, who is every thing? And how is it possible we should desire any thing but what is according to his Will

66 *The Happy Life: Or,*

Will, if in doing his Will, which is the same with himself, we make our selves inseparable from him for ever, in order to be eternally Happy? Were it possible for us to comprehend the true Happiness, of conforming our Wills absolutely to His, we certainly would devote our Wills by an inviolable Love to His, because we should feel beforehand a true Relish of those Felicities he has promised to us. To renounce to our own Wills here below, in order to follow that which is given us from above, makes us rather lead the Life of Angels, than of Men; and how is it possible we should stumble in the Carreer of our Life, if our Eyes as we go along, are constantly fix'd on him, who gives Lustre to that very Star that enlightens us? He, that once has learn'd to make God's Will his Will, by a Submission proceeding from his Mind rather than from his Necessity, knows every thing that is requisite
to

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to be learnt, to attain to Salvation; this Lesson alone containing the whole Science of true Christianity. What can be taught us that is more Glorious, than to obey, (without Reserve or Reluctancy) him, who has given us at once both Light and Reason. The more absolute our Will is, the more our Submission to that of God renders our Felicity admirable, and being founded upon Justice, encreases its true Value. If we are so blinded as to want Proofs for this Truth, let us not grudge to satisfy our Minds, since the Infallibility of them will lead us to the Way to that Tranquillity we look for.

If it be true, that the vain Desires of our Hearts, are the Causes of all their Inquietudes; he that conforms his Will to God's Will, has all the Reason in the World to call himself the most contented Man in the Universe, because he can even wish for no more. O
what

68 *The Happy Life : Or,*

what a most precious Tranquillity! to lay the Foundation of our Happiness upon God's Will, because it is unalterable; O what a most surprizing Content! to look for it in him who must render it everlasting, because it will be endless. The only Way to encompass this Happiness, is, not to open our Mouths, without saying to God, *His Will be done both on Earth and in Heaven.* What an Advantage is it to us Mortals, to see our Hearts to entertain the Echo of these adorable Words, and to make them resound from one End of the Earth to the other. But in order to gain an entire Satisfaction equally Glorious and Beneficial to us, we must let them make so deep an Impression on our Souls, as may make all their Faculties and Strength eternally submit to their Creator.

MORAL

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

I Can't but imagine this Truth, viz. That we ought to submit our Wills to God's Will, to be beyond all Dispute; but I can't but wonder, that, it being such, by the general Consent of all the World, we should not receive those Laws, which are inviolable, but with Constraint.

God's Will ought not only to be considered as it is absolute, but also as it is just, that so Reason may be the Object of our Obedience rather, than of Necessity.

Can any thing be more rational, than to obey him without Reserve, whom we ought to love above all Things?

Is it reasonable, Force should draw us into that Path, where Duty alone ought to be our Guide?

If

70 The Happy Life: Or,

If we learn but to Love, we shall soon know how to Obey; Love and Obedience never part Company.

A Heart wounded with the Love of God soon engages the Mind to submit, without murmuring, to his most adorable Will; and it is in this Submission alone, we can meet with a solid Tranquillity.

We should never put our selves to the Trouble of knowing what is to befall us, 'tis enough that God knows it, our Destiny is in his Hands; and being born to Obey, we must live and die in Obedience, if we expect our Life and Death to be equally happy.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

*If we expect to be happy, we must
commit our selves to the Conduct
of Providence.*

THERE being certain Maxims which are true beyond all Contradiction, this which I lay down here, is one of that kind, *viz.* That in order to go on without Fear, and with Joy, in the most difficult Carreer of our Life, we must blindly follow the Commands of Providence. Such as have God in View in their Prayers, never lose the Effects thereof, because the Justice of them makes them to be heard; and, if it be true, that the Vanity of our Desires causes our Pain and Inquietude, the same Rules that direct us to regulate our Passions, will serve for acquiring that Tranquillity we seek for. Our Complaints against Providence are as unjust as they are fruitless; It favours highly of
Vanity,

72 *The Happy Life : Or,*

Vanity, to expect She should change her unalterable Decrees for our Contentment, whilst we persist at the same time in our pernicious Course of displeasing her. What can be more inestimable to a Man walking in a Road surrounded with Precipices, than to have the Advantage of a Light which for its Brightness exceed the Sun it self; and to have him for his Guide, who directs every Motion of this Beautiful Star.

We ought always to look upon Providence as seated on the unshaken Throne of Destiny, where she executes her Commands, and pronounces her Oracles from all Eternity. A wise Man never refuses what Presents Necessity offers him, because this refusal would stand him in no stead; Reason submits, when Necessity controuls; but if you will merit any thing by Obedience, it must spring from the Heart, the Manner of Obeying either enhances or diminishes its Glory. The manner

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manner of carrying the Burthen of this Life, renders it either light or heavy, and to clear it from all Inconveniences, *Reason* must be our Light, and *Duty* our Guide.

I am extreamly delighted in the Words of St. *Francis*, who, with the greatest Humility in the World, sent up these most excellent Words to Heaven, *Either to obey, or to die.* So soon as he was capable of making Use of his Reason, he chose Obedience for his Share, and the better to enable himself to put in practise his Vow of Obedience, he could not be prevail'd upon to be Superior of the Convent, whereof he was the Founder, that thus dying in Obedience, She might make up the Glory of his Death, as She had bin the Felicity of his Life. What is the Reason, why so many have look'd for their terrestrial Paradise in Retirements, but, because they knew, it was scarce to be met with any where else; and, I don't wonder at their living contentedly,

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74 *The Happy Life : Or,*

tentedly, for their constant Obedience, is so acceptable to God, that he heaps his Mercies upon them. We ought always to appear before him, like blind Men, who stretch out their Hands, to be conducted by Providence ; we can't walk far without stumbling, if we trust to our own selves ; the Light of the Senses is so very dark, that without the Help of some other Light, we are in danger of falling, beyond Recovery. Those that wish for nothing, are above every thing, and when once we have consecrated our Will to God's Will, Good and Evil are the same thing to us, and being given us by the same Hand, we must receive them with the same Countenance ; not but that there is a real Difference betwixt them, but the Submission of our Hearts, leaves us not at Liberty to make this Distinction. Happy is he who fixes all his Hopes in God, because in so doing they
change

change their very Nature: For, it is not barely to hope, when you put your Confidence in him; because you enjoy beforehand, that *Good* you hope for. There is so much Satisfaction in knowing your Hopes to be infallible, that the Joy of this Knowledge may be put into an equal Ballance with the Possession it self. 'Tis no less than to mistrust God, to forestall as it were, his Favours, by continual Sollicitations: Is it not enough for us, to know, that he is sensible of every thing we stand in need of? And at the same time we seem to want every thing, we shall want nothing, provided we lose not our Patience, which will be crown'd in due time. What a Satisfaction is it, to live under the Conduct of Him who governs every thing by Weight and Measure! What a Tranquility, to put our Confidence in Him! What a Joy, to be sensible of no other, but what he Himself be-

76 *The Happy Life : Or,*

flows upon us ! And what a Felicity to look upon Him always, as the Object and End of our Happiness ? If we call his Promise in question, let us consider, to our own Confusion, that Truth it self has no other Pledge but it self, for the Performance of its Promises.

Can the Lustre of an Empire be preferable to the Subjection we vow to Him ? Can any absolute Power on Earth, be more satisfactory than the Obedience we pay him ? And what greater Satisfaction can we wish for, than to obey his Commands ; because in so doing we have nothing to fear, nor can hope for any thing more ? Those who complain of the Evils they endure, have doubtless forgot what Sins they have committed. Their Misfortune is their Chastisement, and as often as Fortune sends them some Afflictions, they ought to look upon God's Justice, which punishes them.

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them. You may see even very good Men labour under heavy Afflictions, but you know not what Consolations God is pleas'd to afford them ; and you need not doubt, but that, at the same time he laments his Pain, out of a Frailty of Nature, the Joy he feels in his Soul, contradicts his Complaints, by the Strength of God's Mercies. O ! who would not pitch his Tent under the Standard of Providence ! This is the only Place where we must fix our Habitation here below, if we intend to live without Inquietudes. She is a loving Hostess, who gives her Guests, every thing they want, without asking for any other Reward, but to trust to her Promises. Not, but that every one ought to follow his Profession, and to be industrious in making use of the Talent God has entrusted him with, each in his Station ; but we must always put our Confidence in this Foster-mother of the Universe, because

78 *The Happy Life: Or,*

By an uninterrupted Concatenation of Actions, She preserves every thing that Nature has produc'd.

A Man must certainly have the Impudence of a Devil, to upbraid Her with taking Delight in destroying her own Works. We ought to undeceive our selves in that Point, All that is Good comes from Her, and tho' we receiv'd it from an unknown Hand, 'tis Her, that furnishes it to be given to us. Let us put our Confidence only in Her, if we intend to make Hope and Enjoyment one and the same thing; and let us expect from Her alone, every thing we hope for from Fortune; because her Wheel is guided in all its Motion by Providence.

O! most adorable Providence! Thy most hidden Ways by which thou conducts us to our desir'd Ends, without controuling our Liberty, How worthy are they of Admiration, so soon as they are discover'd to us Mortals! How is it possible for us to shut our Eyes
against

against the Light thou givest us, unless it be out of Respect and Fear? As nothing is more requir'd from us than to follow Thee, to keep in the right Path, so, the Laws thou hast given us are sufficient, to lead us to the Way of Tranquilly, because in this Obedience is center'd the Felicity of our Lives.

In vain we offer our Addresses and Vows to Fortune, Providence knows her Favourites, and all the Favours we hope for from the first, can't come from any other Hand but from the last; We may long enough spend our time in Worshipping her, 'tis all in vain, unless Providence approves of them; because She disposes of Men's Hearts and Minds at Pleasure, to render our Endeavours acceptable. We may frame Projects, but we must consult her Oracles, if we expect to see a good Issue. We may make the Draught of a Structure, but 'tis She that must

80 *The Happy Life: Or,*

lay the first Stone, if you intend to see it well accomplish'd. Her Light being to our Hearts, what the Sun is to our Bodies, She ought to serve us instead of a Guide by Land, to avoid falling; and in lieu of a Pilote by Sea, to avoid the Shelves. Providence rules with an absolute Sway, and we ought to acknowledge her Sovereignty; She governs the Universe, we must therefore rely upon her Conduct: The World is directed by her Commands, we living in the same Sphere, must submit to her Jurisdiction; but Reason ought to induce us to what Necessity would otherwise impose upon us. Providence designs us for what she thinks fit, and 'tis enough to know Her Power to make us obedient to her, and that with Joy; since in her absolute Commands we must consider her as our common Mother.

A Favorite, if he enjoy Abundance of Pleasure, is not therefore

The Contented Man. 81

fore the most happy Man, because he is not free from Inquietude: Solid Tranquillity is not to be found in Grandure; 'Tis the *Good Man* can really call himself happy, let his Condition be what it will, for he carries his Felicity along with him. In knowing how to obey, he draws from this Knowledge that Light which causes the Happiness of his Life. Since we owe our Being to Providence, She knows what is to befall us, and 'tis enough, that She knows it; to free us from all further Concern. Is it in our Power to change her Ways? 'Tis enough for us to be taught to walk, to follow the Path, unto which She directs us, without looking backwards, because what is to come, has only a relation to us. I am surpriz'd, how People can be so over-curious in enquiring after their Fortune, since it is in our Hands, (through God's Mercy) as well as our Salvation. A

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82 *The Happy Life: Or,*

Wise Man is never solicitous on account of his Destiny, because he is in a great measure Master of it himself. *Good* being always his Object, and *Glory* the End he aims at, he always has a Regard to the first, in order to obtain the last; and thus he pursues his Career with Pleasure, every Step being crown'd with Happiness.

'Tis not for us to chuse the Path we are to tread, to finish our Course; we must follow that which is chalk'd out for us, without reflecting upon Providence; because there is no turning back, no stopping by the Way. And under this Necessity of following Time, that leads us, if our Duty engages us to go on forward, the rest of our Journey will seem so Pleasant to us, that even we shall become forgetful of our Age, knowing that we can never grow old in the Pursuit of Virtue.

What good will it do a Man, to be out of Humour, in a Ship under

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der Sail with a favourable Wind, and to grumble against the Pilot, who has his Life in his Hands? Let us submit rather to Reason than to Necessity, to reap all the Benefit from our Obedience. The Wise Man knows not what Constraint is, because he himself prevents its absolute Commands.

I can't but stand admir'd at the Resolution of that illustrious Hostess of the Prophet? She had no more (at the time of a general Scarcity) than one Spoonful of Oil, and a Handful of Flower; notwithstanding which, she is so charitable as to give it to her Guest, in this Confidence, That God will not leave her destitute: She does not remain long in Suspence betwixt Hope and Fear, the last not in the least touches her Heart, her Soul being fill'd with the first, whence it is, that she sees them crown'd with Success; the Prophet augments her Oil and Flower in so miraculous a manner, that she is
never

84 *The Happy Life : Or,*

never to see it diminish'd during that Calamity. Thus Providence acts with us, 'tis enough to put our Trust in her, to make us Happy; and 'tis sufficient to hope, to render us Contented. 'Tis She herself that teaches us to ask every Day for our Sustenance, in order to keep our Hearts within Bounds by this Chain of Necessity, because She knows the Ties of Love may be broken. O what a surprizing Goodness! to make us purchase with our Desire only, every thing we can expect from her! Every one is for Content; we need only to commit our selves to God's Providence, He being the true *Neptune* who governs with an absolute Sway this Ocean of the World: We need not fear the Storms, it being He who raises them. Those that stand in Fear of every thing, let them only fear Him, and they need not to dread any thing further: Those that are full of vain Hopes, need only put their Hopes in Him, to feel
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the Effects thereof: Those that have gone astray from the right Way, let them only follow Him, and they will be brought to the true Path. 'Tis certain the greatest Shame that can be, for a Christian, to ask for a Pledge of what we are promis'd by *Truth*, since it is She that assures us, That all such as leave themselves to the Conduct of Providence, without looking backwards, shall always see both a happy End of their Desires, and a good Success of their Hopes.

To call Providence in question, a Man must debase his Mind below the very Instinct of Beasts; these worship after their manner that charitable Mercy, from which they receive their Nourishment. To despair of Providence, is actually to renounce to all the Rights, as well as to all Priviledges of Nature. To despise the Assistance of Providence, is to bid farewell to one's Reason, this being the last Extremity a Man can fall into.

Who

86 *The Happy Life : Or,*

Who can be so frail as to believe, that He who has given us our Being, should abandon us to the Mercy of Chance, to linger on, in Misery, that Life he has given us? Nature, the common Mother of every thing, has so strong an Inclination for their Preservation, that nothing can be conceiv'd to exceed it ; and at the same time their Sovereign Creator, out of a Motive of Hatred, far exceeding her Inclinations, is to expose them to all the Hazards of Time and Fortune, to make them submit to the Hardships that attend both ; a Man must be bereav'd of common Sense, who can be so frail as to imagine it. How happy is that Man, who wants not Faith to submit himself without reserve, to the Conduct of Providence ! without having any other regard, than to her self in his Desires, as well as in his Hopes ! The Pains he takes for his Subsistence will prove even relishing to him, when he receives it at Her Hands
with

with a Heart full of Submission, and a Soul replenish'd with Confidence in Her. To put our Hopes in her, is to enjoy beforehand every thing we can desire, because the Success of our Hopes is infallible.

Did ever a Man repent of having trusted to Providence? and did ever a Man die without repenting himself, of not having look'd in her alone for all his Consolation? The true solid Tranquillity of our Lives, consists in leading an innocent Life under Her Conduct; he that neglects to take Her for a Guide, always loses his Way, till he runs to his own Ruin: 'Tis true, Faith is God's Gift, but such a one as he never refuses to any that ask for it; and this being the only Good which brings us to Him that shall be without End, must not a Man be his own Enemy, who does not wish for both with the utmost of his Power?

'Tis

88 *The Happy Life: Or,*

'Tis in vain for a Man to chalk out his own Way, for his Conduct, If, in going along he does not keep God in view, he will always walk in the dark, and so will of Necessity stumble, and be under a continual Apprehension that his Fall is infallibly at Hand. If you chuse Providence for your Pilot in this tempestuous Sea of the World, this is the way to shelter your self against all the Storms and Tempests that so often surprize the Vessel of our Life. What is it we can fear under her Protection, since even Misfortunes change their Faces before our Eyes, tho' they can't change their Names, because Providence obliges us, to put them among our Felicities. As you never saw one unhappy in the Pursuit of Virtue, so you will see none miserable under the Conduct of Providence; he who submits to Her Protection, never dreads Fortune. For, how can he dread it? Because it turns not its Wheel, but according

according to the Direction of the other. A Heart that submits to the Laws of Providence, never finds them too harsh; a Soul replenish'd with Hopes in Her, never is frustrated in them; our Eyes fix'd incessantly on Her, guide us forward in the midst of Darkness, as if it were in a bright Day. Happy is he who calls this Truth in question, with an Intention to be convinc'd thereof by his own Experience, because after he has made once Trial thereof, he will be cur'd of his Doubt for ever.

The Blindness of most People highly deserves our Compassion: Every one looks upon his own Industry, as an infallible Means to succeed in his Designs, without making due Reflections, that God exercises his Sovereign Power in every thing. If we don't look upon Providence as one who has all the Events in her Disposal, we shall certainly see her in an unlucky

90 *The Happy Life: Or,*

lucky Day; and whatever Good or Evil befalls us from the Hand of Providence, those who attribute them to Chance, will never enjoy a solid Tranquillity, let them look for it as long as they will. He that mistrusts Providence, robs God premeditately of that Glory which properly belongs to him. As Faith alone makes us Christians, so that, which we repose in his Goodness, renders us worthy of Mercies; so that a Man's Happiness is proportion'd to his Confidence in God. All the Moral and Political Maxims of a Christian center in this; To have God in view in all his Designs, if he expects to see an happy Issue of them; and, if we don't make them our Maxims, we thereby make ourselves unworthy of Compassion, because our Frailty is voluntary. He that without reserve submits to the Conduct of Providence, secures himself against all the Misfortunes that can befall him, because these
Mis-

The Contented Man. 91

Misfortunes even change their Name, because they don't affect him.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

OUR Submission to the sovereign Commands of Providence makes the Felicity of our Lives. We must expect and receive every thing from Her Hands, if we intend to be Contented for ever. This is the Way to make us look upon the Good and Evil that befalls us, with the same Eye, because both come from her; and our Mind being once enlightned with this Truth, we enjoy that Tranquillity we so much wish'd for, having now nothing else to desire, but the Continuance of our Felicity.

A Christian that is Wise, ought so well to employ every Moment of his Life, as not to dread its End; for, if he treads the Path of Uprightness,

92 The Happy Life : Or,

ness, under the Conduct of Providence, it is indifferent to him, at what time or age he finishes his Course. The only Way to live is, not to fear Death; and 'tis this Fear alone, that disturbs the apparent Repose of a Voluptuous Life.

'Tis in vain for us to frame Projects, and to make Use of all our Prudence to succeed therein, the Success thereof depends not on her, but must come from above; and let our Wits be never so quick, they are soon at a stand and in the dark, when they are to foresee Futurities; so that it is no less than flattering ones self, to expect any Benefit from them on that account.

All the Measures we are able to take, fall too short to reach our Point; we must of Necessity have recourse to the Compass of Providence, because her Rules are infallible.

*I can't but compassionate those, who being addicted to the World, hope to
reap*

The Contented Man. 93

reap the desir'd Fruits from their own Labour, just as if it was their Industry, that was to crown them with Success. As every thing depends in its Motion from the Primum Mobile, so we can't act without that Motion, which is communicated to us by Providence. In vain we set up the Sails, unless She will be pleas'd to send us Wind; and, if by chance we should reach the Harbour, we will infallibly meet with our Destruction there, unless we pay due Homage to this Star of the Seas, which alone has an uncontroulable Ascendant over all created Beings.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

Every one ought to seek for his Tranquillity in that Station he is call'd to, because it is not to be found any where else.

'TIS certainly true, and I can't but repeat it again; neither the Great, nor the Small compass of that Orb wherein we are placed makes the Repose of our Life; the whole consists in filling up the Extent of ones Sphere; in looking upon the Center, and not carrying our Thoughts beyond it, this is the only way to Contentment. If all those, in their different Stations, that are either above or below us, should move in us either Compassion or Envy, we must be accounted the most unfortunate on Earth. Every one ought to stand fixt in his appointed Station; What Advantage are we likely to gain by raising our Thoughts to a Throne,

Throne, when we are born to be Subjects? Vain Wishes serve only to punish us, by the Inquietudes they cause in us; Their Vanity is criminal, 'tis actually to lead an unquiet Life, to be happy only in Hopes. After we are ty'd to a certain Profession, we must consider, that Providence has made that Tye, which it is not lawful for us to untye; since She has enabled us at the same time to do our Duty in our respective Stations, to meet with a true Tranquillity, whilst we are endeavouring our Salvation. What a Pleasure is it to think of nothing but our Satisfaction, by doing that which is just! What a Happiness is it to labour without Intermiſſion to obtain our Felicity, by knowing the Cause of our Misfortunes? And what a Tranquillity, to preserve that which Reason has beſtow'd upon us, in fulfilling with Joy our Duty in that little Sphere wherein we are placed by Deſtiny.

We

96 *The Happy Life : Or,*

We ought to look with Admiration upon whatever is exalted above us, because God has thought fit to order it so; and whatever we see below us, ought to fill our Hearts with Joy, because we find our selves in a *Medium*, which may serve for a Foundation of our Tranquillity. Is not our Destiny very happy, if we are neither Rich nor Poor, and find our selves in a Station, from whence we may look upon Grandure without Envy, and upon Misery without Fear! Let the Great ones go on Triumphantly in their Career, 'tis enough for us happily to finish ours. Let the World extol their Glories, he that goes on quietly shall obtain the Crown. The Glory of the World is soon buried in Oblivion; and 'tis much better to despise than to enjoy Her Treasures. Each Profession, unto which we are call'd by God, ought to be our Trade, in which we have served our Apprenticeship; and since Justice alone

The Contented Man. 97

None can instruct us, we need only follow her Directions, to meet with Success in our several Stations. 'Tis true, every thing is transitory; but the Satisfaction of doing well remains constantly with us. Every thing flies away I must confess; but the Contentment of growing old in pursuit of Vertue, follows us even beyond the Grave. How often have I wish'd for some apparent Happiness, the Possession whereof would have rendred me unhappy, by some unknown Misfortunes, which infallibly would have attended them? Every thing we desire besides God, turns only to our Detriment; and supposing the Success answers our Expectation to day, it will look with a quite different Face to morrow, to our Confusion.

A wise Man looks upon the Inconstancy of the Times with his usual Firmness, and without measuring their Strength by the weight of their Burthen, bears it with the
F greater

98 *The Happy Life : Or,*

greater Resolution, because he knows he has but a little Way to go, after he is convinc'd, that he who has laid it upon his Shoulders, will not suffer him to sink under it. 'Tis in the Power of every body (through God's Mercy) to establish his Tranquillity in that Station he is plac'd in by the Light of Reason, 'tis She that shews him the Way he must take to live contentedly. As the Peace of our Soul makes the Happiness of our Life, so we ought to confine our Wishes to what is just, and our Hopes to what is necessary, in order to enjoy that Tranquillity, which the Justness of our Pretensions and Designs can bestow upon us.

'Tis not enough to live, but we ought also to relish the Pleasures of Life; and we shall never meet with any that are real, unless we worthily fill up that Place we are put in; if we leave an empty Space, it will prove the Occasion of all our Inquietudes. We should never raise our Ambition to such a pitch we are not able to attain to unless in our Thoughts, let

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us leave Futurities to the Disposal of Providence, this being a sovereign Prerogative peculiar to her self; and let us pray Her to grant us her Mercy, to enjoy, what is present, as it is transient; because without it we shall be subject to continual Inquietudes, concerning the Consequences thereof.

Complaints from the Mouth of Creature, made to his Creator, are always undecent; As his Origin which is owing to his Omnipotent Hand, ought always to be the Object of his Thoughts, so ought all his Words tend to Thankfulness and Acknowledgment at the Remembrance of this Mercy, which he is sensible he can't lay claim to by his Merits. Can any thing be more reasonable and just, than to make Use of Time, as he who has made it, is pleas'd to give it to us, considering we live from day to day, without being secure of one? As often as we carry our Thoughts beyond it, we transgress the Bounds

100 *The Happy Life : Or,*

prescrib'd to us ; the Great Creator of all Ages both pass'd and to come, reserves the absolute Disposal of every Moment to his own Mercy and Justice ; what signifies it under what Circumstances we accomplish the Course of our Life, provided our last Steps are crown'd with Glory. That part of the Way we have left behind us, is reckon'd for nothing ; and that part we are to travel hereafter being unknown ; it ought to be indifferent to us, (considering the Necessity we lie under of moving always forward) whether we are admir'd by those that go along with us, and those that follow us ; because their Destiny is the same with ours, seeing they can't foresee either their good or ill Fortune.

If a Man is able to live upon his Talent, he has no Reason to complain of his Fortune ; There is a great Satisfaction in subsisting upon the Product of what you have sow'd, and in cultivating the Ground
that

that bears them, in hopes of another Harvest. 'Tis enough that God gives His Blessing to our Labour; if we happen to want Necessaries, doubtless we have bin wanting first in our Confidence to God; he that puts his Hopes in Him, will never hope in vain. Tho' there be as many different Ways that bring us to Death, as there are different Conditions of Men, they all meet at the Grave; and every Moment we breath, being a Moment of Mercy to us (since we are secure not so much as of one) it ought to be indifferent to us, whether we finish our Life in Pomp, or Obscurity, since both are soon bury'd in Oblivion. Our Content is not to be measur'd by our Riches, let our Condition be what it will, we are always happy, as long as our Mind is at Ease; and the way to obtain it, is to be satisfy'd with what is necessary, and despise what is superfluous: This Moderation and Neglect make our true Felicity.

102 *The Happy Life: Or,*

If the Sphere in which we are plac'd is of too large an Extent, Reason must be our Compass to make it straiter, and whilst she is labouring on that Work, we may hope for a happy Issue. Whatever Pomp may attend us here, it can't make the Felicity of our Life, 'tis Virtue only that ought to be our Companion; and then we have nothing more to wish for. Let our Condition be never so mean, we may expect and find in it that Tranquillity we seek for; and as every one may succeed in this Design rather by his good Life, than by his great Fortune, this last becomes useless to him, so soon as he puts the other in Practice.

Mankind would be very unhappy if their Content depended on others and not on themselves; Every one has, in some measure, his Tranquillity and Salvation in his own Hands, and from that Moment he applies himself to the obtaining of both, God's Mercy is such, as to reward his Labour before

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fore it is finish'd, by that firm Hope of seeing it brought to a happy Issue. 'Tis a singular Benefit to know, that, so soon as we devote your Services to God, he rewards them by the Satisfaction we feel upon that account; He gives us a Taste of the Sweetness of that Good we hope for, before he puts us into Possession of it. O stupendious Effects of Virtue! 'tis impossible to love her, and to complain; Let us not object the Obstacles we meet with in following Her, the Pleasure far surpasses the Pain, and you forget the last from the same Moment you taste the other. I am not ignorant, that Ambition has no Bounds, that every one frames to himself a certain Degree of Felicity, which he ascends to in his Imagination, not being able to reach it in Reality. And 'tis in this Point, we are most ingenious in finding out means to afflict our selves, in carrying our Designs beyond what is in our Power. 'Tis in vain to believe, when we reflect upon

104 *The Happy Life: Or,*

our past Life, that it has bin our own Fault we have not bin much richer and much more fortunate than we are; No earthly Wisdom is capable of making us either Great or Happy; it bears no Share in either, we must attribute all to Providence, She serves us for a Guide on the Road we are to travel, and brings us to the End of it, which always will prove happy, provided we obey her Commands with Submission. Since God has design'd us, even before we were born, to the same Station we are to live in, 'tis our Duty to let him see our Obedience after we are certify'd of his Will, without considering into what Employment he has put us. The whole tends to our Salvation, which being the Consequence of our Endeavours rather than of any Dignities, these last are useless, but the others necessary; and this Necessity ought to be the more acceptable to us, because it has for its Object the *Infinite Good*. There is but one Paradise, and we can lay
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claim only to one Paradise; this is the Prize set up for every Body, this is the Reward design'd for all the World, and to carry it, is sufficient to be a Good Man; this Qualification being preferable to all the rest we stand indebted for to Fortune.

Not, but that there are divers Ways from Life to Death, but, as they meet all at the Grave, 'tis there where there is not the least Distinction betwixt the Rich and the Poor; 'tis there, you can't find the least Difference betwixt the Ashes of the *Great Alexander* and those of *Diogenes*: *Alexander* appear'd in the World as terrible as Thunder and Lightning, but he is gone like a sudden Storm or Torrent, that leaves nothing but Dirt behind it. And *Diogenes* who confin'd all his Ambition to the same Wine-pipe, which was his Habitation, has made the greatest Men in the World confess, that there is more Content in despising, than in conquering her.

106 *The Happy Life: Or,*

We must always believe that Station we are in to be the best ; if it seems too strait for us, it will grow longer in proportion as we humble our selves : Humility takes up but a little room, and 'tis not for us to chuse our Rank here below, 'tis Providence that appoints it ; and the last Place is no less honourable than the first, provided we keep it with Submission, for, that is the cause of our Glory. How happy is he (let his Condition be what it will) who submits with Respect to the Laws of Him, who has given them ! Let us not fear to sink under the Weight of our Burden, He knows what we are able to bare ; and let us not imagine, that he stops his Ears to our Prayers, they are open to all the World. Let us not complain of our Pain, let us not lose our Hopes when in Misery ; that the Way to conquer both. We are at the Disposal of Providence just as the Counters are in a Bankers Hand, who sets what value he pleases

The Contented Man: 107

pleases upon them; Providence exalts and humiliates us at Pleasure, 'tis enough that we are the Subject of Her Care, She Herself will set the Value. Tho' perhaps we are not regarded by any body, whilst we are in our Career in pursuit of Virtue, we are admir'd by all the World so soon as we are come to the End of it, because that rewards our Pains; and the good Reputation we leave behind us, restores to us that Glory we were robb'd of before. When we die, 'tis soon forgot what Livery we wore in our Life time; every one takes notice only how we put them off, because 'tis that that gives it the true Value. After we have once bid our first Farewell to the World, by breaking off the Course of the strongest Inclinations that could be, the last are purchas'd at an easie rate; and that happy Moment we bid Adieu to them, is the first of our Felicity; We begin to be happy at that very Minute, we begin to live thus.

108 *The Happy Life : Or,*

I can't but have some Respect to the Condition of a Gardener, who seeing himself confin'd within the narrow Bounds of his Garden, cultivates the Flowers and Plants, and thus passes away the Days of his Life. He is sensible that Life it self is no more than a Flower which fades by time, as the other does by the Sun. Nay, I think him not unhappy, if the Weeds of his Garden don't grow in his Soul; For, free from all Ambition, he does not measure his Tranquillity by his Fortune, and so he may be very happy in his mean Employment. All those that are so desirous of Greatness, know not whether they are necessary to them; and 'tis in this consists the Knowledge of a Christian; he ought to learn to know what is useful for his Salvation, all the rest is only imaginary.

I know not what to make of those who are guilty of that Frailty, to spend the whole time of their Lives, in endeavouring to raise their Fortune

tune in the World ; whereas it is certain, that, since the very Beginning of the Creation, no Man ever did make his own Fortune. 'Tis true, we may aggrandize our selves, but this Grandure adds nothing to our Being, we always continue the same : I mean, let us ascend to what a Degree of Greatness we can, that will not make us change our Face, we shall be known by our first Character. Mankind is always the same, 'tis in vain for a Man to disguise himself before his own Face, Time will soon discover his Error and make him know himself. Those who frequently change their Condition, will have much ado to find one that may be convenient for them ; but the whole consists in living in it like a Christian. He who does not acquit himself of his Duty, acts contrary to what he ought to do, and so works out his own Destruction. The same Earth which affords us our Grave, will be our Reward.

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110 *The Happy Life : Or,*

The Choice of our Condition is the Foundation of our Tranquillity, and as often as our Mind is bulie in determining it, it is involv'd in Troubles and Inquietudes, which are owing to our selves, because we walk without a secure Guide. Those that live in suspense, I mean, without reflecting duly upon their manner of living, dye under the same Uncertainty ; Judge you by the Nature of their Death, of the Nature of those Misfortunes that attend it.

You will never meet with a true Tranquillity if you always run, you must stop now and then, if you will enjoy it; and you must have a Place to stop in, which, when you have fix'd on, you must fill it up, (as I told you before) instead of taking Possession of it only, that so the same Tranquillity which we have obtain'd, may follow us even beyond the Grave. All the Tranquillity we enjoy in this World is only by Intervals, it lasts only

only a Moment, we ought therefore to endeavour the Establishment of such a Repose, as has no Dependance on Time. I can't take any Delight in what bares only the Name of *Good*, be it never so pleasing, it can't satisfy my Heart, if it be not durable; because it always sighs after what is *Good* to all Eternity. Hence it is, that every Moment I hear the most charming Harmony of these Words to resound in my Ears, *I shall be satisfy'd O Lord, when thy Glory shall appear before my Eyes*, every thing else appears frightful to me, I can't endure the Sight of it, unless enforce'd thereunto by Necessity.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

After a Man has chosen a certain Profession, he ought not to relinquish it, nor carry his Designs beyond or above it, if he intends to enjoy

112 The Happy Life: Or,

enjoy that true Tranquillity which is so much desir'd by all the World.

Let us not murmur against Destiny: Let us do our Duty in that Station it has plac'd us, and let us follow without Reluctancy, that Path, wherein it conducts us to our End. He, that challenges nothing upon Earth, but a little Space of Ground for his Grave, is not very solicitous which Way he comes to it.

Let our Life be as long as it will, our Journey from the Cradle to the Grave is so short, that we have nothing else to do but to endeavour to come to a happy End, without considering our time passes away, since each Moment may be far different from the next following.

Let us not look backwards, so as to upbraid our selves with our ill Conduct in reference of making our Fortane; For, since Providence absolutely disposes of all such happy Moments as
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we stand in need of to succeed in such Designs, we thereby make her useless and of no Value.

'Tis in vain to reproach our selves with our Misfortune, Heaven has ordain'd it thus; and its uncontrollable Decrees ought to afford us Consolation.

Those that walk'd after us yesterday, may go before us to day, and we overtake them again as often as we set Bounds to our Ambition; 'tis She alone that causes our Inquietudes.

If you fix your self in that Station that is saln to your Lot, you will grow old without repining, and die with Joy: Fortune being like a Comet, that appears in a serene Sky, is always to be dreaded, look on it from what side you will.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

We must make use of our Time as it comes, out of a motive of Reason rather than of Necessity, that so we may sweeten the Harshness of the last, by the Strength of the first.

I Am not ignorant, that all the World takes Time as it comes, but a wise Man makes use of it as he shou'd; having constantly in view, with submission to the absolute Commands of him, who has every Hour in his Disposal. Every thing that is created has such a Dependance on its Creator, that nothing can be conceived beyond it: And 'tis upon the Consideration of this everlasting Truth, that a Soul which is always mindful of her Duty, thinks of nothing else than how to accomplish it; the Pleasure she takes in it, and the Reason that obliges her to it, are one and the same thing to her. As Providence
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is the Guide that directs the Sun in every step of his Course, so every day he gives us, is a new Present, Providence makes us, and it favours of Ingratitude, to make use of her Light to suffer us to be drawn along in the Road that is shewn us, by submitting to her Laws with Reluctancy.

All the World exclaims against the Times; whereas these precious Moments are our best Riches, because they are given us to be employed in Search after Eternity. A Life well settled, finds no Difference in the Season; he that lives well at all times, fears not the Inconstancy of time; and as the Tranquillity of Conscience is the Original of all the happy Days of our Lives, we can't call our selves happy, unless we are beholding to Her alone for our Tranquility. Good and bad Times are directly opposite to one another, yet are they the same in the Eyes of a true Christian Soul; As she is immovable

116 *The Happy Life : Or,*

able in her Resolution of receiving them with an unchangeable Countenance, the habit of Constancy she has acquired gives her new Strength to be insensible to both. In vain does our Heart delight in Changeableness; our Will depends on it self, and it is the more absolute, the more it appears submissive to God's Will.

He, that has created us in Time, will make it such to us as he thinks fit; and we must take it as he will give it, to make the best Use of it, since our Salvation depends on it. If we live without thinking, we shall likewise die so; But, those that take an Account of every Hour of their Lives, are not afraid of the last moment, because they are always ready to depart. From that Minute we are entred into the Career of our Lives, 'tis not our Business to be solicitous, of what Continuance this Course will be, 'tis enough that Providence has given her Directions, nor Prayers nor Complaints

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plaints can change her Eternal Decrees. When the Dread of what is to come renders the present Time disagreeable to us, 'tis the ill Use we make of it which causes that Fear. He that follows his Duty to Day, need not fear to be reproach'd to Morrow; A Christian that is wise, makes use of his Time without depending on it, because all his Actions are directed towards Eternity; And, as in this View his Heart remains as immutable as his Object, he suffers himself to be carry'd along by Necessity, but without the least Violence, since, by anticipating the same by a voluntary Obedience, he feels much more Pleasure than Pain in his Submission.

Tho' we can't be said to be Masters of our Imagination, and, that it is to her we must attribute the cause of our secret Displeasure, as well as of our manifest Joys; yet a mind enlightned with the Light of Vertue, never takes an Appearance for Truth it self; It searches for its
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118 *The Happy Life: Or,*

Tranquility rather in its Judgment than in its Thoughts, knowing, by Experience, that the Heart can't be deceived in the Knowledge of that Tranquillity it stands in need of. A solid Repose is so far different from an imaginary one, that we can't mistake one for the other. As the Soul gives her self that Joy she feels within her, she can't be deceiv'd in that piece of workmanship, to accomplish which, all the Faculties have bin employed without intermission. 'Tis in vain for the Pleasures of our Senses to tempt her by their Charms, their short Continuance renders their Instability sufficiently apparent, whereas the true Enjoyments hold for ever.

We bestow our Time but very ill in making our Complaints about the Times; Its continual Vicissitudes, make us too well fore see a Calm in a Tempest, and a Storm in Fair Weather; not to make the best use (and that with patience) of those Evils which are past Remedy. The
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The Contented Man. 119

Complaints of an unquiet Mind serve only to augment its Inquietudes; as the Silence of a submissive Heart allays that Pain which is not in its Power to cure. If our Pain continues never so long, if we measure it by the Rule of Patience, the days of its Continuance will not be very hard to be numbred; and let our Wound be never so deep, knowing from whence it comes, and seeing the Hand that gave it, we are guilty of much Weakness if we don't rather sigh for Joy, than repine at it.

I am sensible, that Nature will talk often much bigger than Reason; but since she can only propose, and the Will decides, if our first Thoughts by the Strength of our Imagination get the better of our Judgment, 'tis sufficient that the same Heart which conceives them, also discerns them; to find out its Repose even in that Inquietude that afflicts it. He is unhappy indeed, who knows neither how to
live

120 *The Happy Life : Or,*

live nor how to die ; Life is a trouble to him, and Death terrifies him. What Misery can be like it ? The soveraign Remedy against all those Evils, is to walk in the Path of Uprighteousness, with a Resolution never to go astray from it, because this Way entitles us to the Hopes of the Heavenly Mercies, which will free us from all Fear of earthly Calamities, and the Inconstancy of Time ; because we are exalted above them, beyond the Reach of the Empire of Fortune, which is then unknown to us, because all our Dependance is on him, who directs the Motion of its Wheel ; And, if ever our Heart is fill'd up with the Bitterness of Misfortunes, it is enough that God, who has made us drink the bitter Cup, makes us sensible, by way of Consolation, that it is out of the same Cup, which he drank out, to quench his Thirst.

Those that live for Eternity, never complain of Time ; because

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so often as they reflect upon its Continuance, be it never so long, they make so little an account of it (as being nothing in Comparison to the other) that they even disown beforehand these Complaints, which perchance might come from their Mouths.

When all our Pretensions are laid to Heaven, we travel with Pleasure here on Earth, without looking either backward or forward ; because we can make Use only of the present Time : Because, that very Moment we breath in, is so very near the same with the next following, that we have no Leasure to reflect duly upon either, they are of so short a Continuance.

O how precious is Time to a true Christian Soul ! And how ought She to husband every Moment ! since each of them may be perhaps the last of Her Life : She makes due Reflection upon what Necessity She lies under, of improving it to the best Use ; because Her Sal-
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122 *The Happy Life : Or,*

vation depends on it. She knows, that Time is irrecoverable, and that the Sun, which makes us see her precipitate Flight by moving on as fast as she, never returns backwards, tho' he continually renews the same Course. Every Day is different from that which next preceeds, so that, being ignorant of the Number of her Days, She thinks her self oblig'd not to lose one; because on one single Minute depends Her eternal Well-being. We think of nothing more than how to pass the Time away, when it is almost impossible to comprehend, how fast it goes; and yet every one complains that it goes away too slow. What a Piece of Weakness is this ! We have nothing to trust to but the time to come, for us to think of and obtain Eternity, and yet we are dissatisfy'd at its Length, not considering the Difficulty of the Conquest we are to make; just as if Hopes were sufficient to put us into the Possession of it.

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it. I can scarce imagine how a Man can be tir'd in the Work of obtaining his Felicity, since every one must be (through God's Grace) the Workman of his Salvation ; and, if the Task seems something difficult, we must counterpoise the *Good* we hope for, with the *Trouble* we under go ; the Desire of the first, will render the Pain of the last very supportable to us.

Is it not reasonable we should finish our Task with the close of the Day, if we expect to receive the desir'd Reward ? There is so vast a Disproportion betwixt the Glory that is to attend us, and the Pains we have taken, that they don't in the least admit of a Comparison. One Days Work to purchase an everlasting Tranquillity : The thing bears not the least Resemblance.

I know not what to make of those that are so prodigal of their Time, spending it in all manner of Profuseness, just as if they were

124 *The Happy Life : Or,*

Masters of their Destiny ; they afford themselves no time to think of their Life till it is pass'd, as if their Memory were endu'd with a Virtue of renewing it every Day. Such as look upon the Gray Hairs of their Head, and the Wrinkles of their Face, through their Spectacles only, can give but a very indifferent Account of their Age. He is a very unhappy Man, that hears every Minute the domestick Watch Nature has put into his Lungs (for their continual Motion shews them by Respiration) without being touch'd with Fear, lest the Clock should strike to call him away, from whence he can never return. He, that lives without thinking, turns his imaginary Life into everlasting Death.

One wou'd imagine that the rules of common Sense, which teach us to take our Time as it is offer'd by him that has made it, should be known to all the World ; but the greatest Part thereof shew us by their Example, that they are ignorant of them, because they never
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put them in practice. We are oblig'd to leave our selves, together with our Vessel, to the Currents of the Seas, and the Violence of the Winds: But, as in this Case, as well as in all others, a Christian Soul always takes Reason for her Guide; 'tis She that serves us instead of a Pilot at Sea, and 'tis our Duty that gives us light on Earth, to remove all Fear of miscarrying in our Journey. 'Tis under the Favour of the last, and under the Conduct of the first, we may find our Consolation (through Christ's Merits) against that Fear which pursues us, since we are not able to obtain a Cure for it; but it suffices, that this Consolation renders our Pain insensible to us. A true Christian needs not to beg his Consolations from others, in any of his Afflictions, since he may find his Comfort in him who sends them: The Wounds he has receiv'd look for their Cure from the same Hand that gave them. Tho' each Day is a new Day, yet 'tis the same Sun.

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that makes them. Our Days of Joy, and our Days of Affliction, are set down in the same Almanacks where our Years are fix'd; and those Days being determin'd before us, we need only have recourse to Patience, (not to be surpriz'd) when the last happen; and to Moderation, (that we may not be forgetful of our selves) when the first fall to our share.

It is very ill becoming a Christian to enter into Arguments with him, who has given him his Reason. His first Lesson teaches him, to submit entirely to all the Laws he has given him; and, if the Difficulty of performing them makes his Heart to murmur, He ought to be beforehand with it by a real Repentance, and condemn these Complaints before he makes them. 'Tis a great Happiness for us to suffer our selves to be govern'd by Him, who governs with so much Wisdom every thing he has created, and who is infallible in every thing he does. Error and Blindness are so natural
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to us, that they are the very same with our own Nature ; whereas, what is to come is with God the same as what is present, He can never err ; nay, even the present Time is at such a Distance from us, (because the Eyes of our Understanding are darken'd) that we often are misguided by our own Light. O how unhappy should we be, did God abandon us to our own Conduct ; and still more unhappy, did he leave us at Liberty, to chuse the Days of our Life : It being very probable that we should chuse nothing but Spring and Autumnal Days, both these Seasons would end in the Winter Season, that would last forever. This undeniable Rule may serve as an unalterable Foundation to all the Fellicities of the World : All the different Ways leading to Voluptuousness meet in Pain and Repentance, I say, in an everlasting Pain, because there is no repenting in Eternity. Let us then lay hold of Time as it comes to our

128 *The Happy Life: Or,*

Hands, and dispose our selves to accept of it as God is pleas'd to offer it: Good and Evil are equally useful to us, according to the Use we make of them. If it be fair Weather, it lasts not very long, and a Calm is always the fore-runner of Tempest; and if it be a foul Day, its short continuance ought to be our Comfort; But happy is he who stands in no need of Consolation! and still more happy he, who looks for it only in the pursuit of Virtue; because whilst he is following Her Steps, She is making up his Reward.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

Since He who has made Time, has regulated every Hour, we must take it, as He is pleas'd to give it, and look upon his absolute Commands with a submissive Heart, rather, than with an uneasie Mind, that so we may find Tranquillity in our Obedience.
And

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And having but a little time to live in this World, let us live so as to be at every Moment in a Condition to dye.

The only way not to complain of what is present, is, not to repine at what is pass'd, and not to dread what is to come.

Those, who rightly consider the true Nature of Time, always present to our Eyes, but always inapprehensible to our Understanding, ought to represent to themselves the Good and Evil of that Eternity which is to succeed it, that so they may obtain the first by avoiding the last; and since even those that husband their time for the best, neglect often times, something which they ought to have done, let us therefore do that to Day which we intended to reserve till to Morrow, that so we may employ that little time that is left us in doing well. This is the way to make a true Ballance betwixt the Contentment of this Life, and the Happiness of Death.

C H A P. IX.

Desire and Fear being the two things which cause all our Pain, and occasion all our Troubles, we must desire nothing but God, and fear nothing but Him, to live Contented for ever.

EXperience teaches us, that our vain Desires, and imaginary Fears, cause all our Inquietudes and Troubles. There is no Heart without Desire, nor a Soul without Fear; and, as this last sets before our Eyes, all the Evils that may befall us, as if they were actually present, and that the other makes us lead a lingering Life, in vain Attempts, we may maintain with good Reason, that, if the one renders us miserable, the other augments the Number of our Miseries. What a sad thing is it to live always with the Desire of a Felicity, without ever enjoying the Possession thereof; and to feel all the Pain which is
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occasion'd by the Apprehension that remains within us? Every thing we wish for, torments us as much as what we fear. Our Desires make us out-run even Futurities, and we look for what is not to be found; And our Fear is so ingenious, as that (after having fill'd our Imagination with that Dread that always attends Fear) it brings the Evils that are still at a great Distance, so near unto us, that we find our selves wounded without seeing the Hand that did it.

'Tis a great Misfortune, to carry within ones Breast, a Heart always fertile of Desires, without ever desiring that which is necessary; and always full of Fears, without any Fear of offending God. We sigh after a transitory Good, and don't desire the soveraign Good. We fear the Evils that may befall us, without fearing Him who can protect us against them. What a strange kind of Madness, to afflict one self by useless Desires and vain Fears!

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132 *The Happy Life : Or,*

We employ our present Time to wish for the future, that so we may never be happy, but only in Hopes, and we make the future our present Time, that so we may suffer all the Evils we are threaten'd with. We must check our covetous Heart, which always aspires to Felicities ; and as it ought to bend all its Thoughts to God, it ought to desire nothing but Himself, because in Him is comprehended every thing that ought to be wish'd for. We must, I say, cure our Souls of that Fear that tyrannises over Her, and since the Sin causes our Pain, let us live innocently, because 'tis Innocence that can procure us Tranquillity. He, that desires God with all his Heart, has no room left for new Desire, because he can desire nothing more ; and, if the Fear of Misfortunes were never so deeply imprinted in his Soul, when he considers that the greatest of all is Sin, he will become insensible to all the rest. O how happy is he who tries
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the Experiment of this Truth! Our Hearts sigh, without seeing the Object that makes them sigh; Our Souls fear, without knowing the Cause of their Fear; Our Desires are after transitory things, which we can't enjoy but for a little while; and we despise our *Infinite Good*, the Possession whereof will be everlasting. We fear imaginary Evils, such as frequently never come to pass, without so much as thinking of these Punishments which will infallibly befall us. He that wishes for no more than what is just, is sure to be heard, and he that makes good Use of the present Time, need not fear that which is to come.

As our Love to God is not to be kept within Bounds of Moderation, so there is not the least Comparison betwixt that Desire of being possess'd of his Glory, with the Pains we take to raise our selves to Honours here below, and 'tis this unhappy Division of our Hearts, which causes all our Inquietudes. We are di-

134 *The Happy Life : Or,*

divided betwixt an equal Desire of the Joys of Heaven and the Enjoyments of the World, and with the same Heart we are apprehensive at once of the Misfortunes of this World, and the Torments of the other. Judge now, whether such a sort of Desire, and such a sort of Fear, can bring us to that Tranquillity we look for. Here you shall see one willing to break the Publick Vows he has made, just as if he were ignorant that the Will is as criminal as the Action it self. What a strange kind of Blindness ! Instead of submitting to that Law he has impos'd upon himself, and to the Yoak he has chosen, instead of bearing those Chains he has forg'd himself, he afflicts, he torments himself, without reflecting, that his Affliction can not alter the Rigour of the Law, nor his Torment remove the Hardship of his Yoak, and that his Inquietudes serve only to encrease the Weight of his Fetters.

What

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What a Pleasure is it, to keep our Life within these Tyes God has made with his own Hand, for which we ought to implore his Mercy ! What a Happiness is it, to dye in a Prison whereof we our selves have surrender'd to Him the Keys, and whereof He is the Keeper ! And how glorious is it, to be in a Condition to fulfil ones Duty in that Station He design'd us from all Eternity ! What happier Destiny can a Man wish for ? Some there are, who are very desirous to see themselves discharg'd from the heavy Burthen of Marriage, not remembering, that the Contract of Marriage was made in Heaven, before the Articles thereof were sign'd here upon Earth. Those Tyes that are made in Heaven, whereby Hearts are link'd together under the Publick Authority, are inseparable. Such Desires are both sacrilegious and useless, and which prove the Tyrants and Executioners of all those unfaithful Hearts that conceive them. Many there are,
who

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who render themselves unfortunate through Fear of being so one time or other, because they put not their Trust in Providence ; just as if She ought to give them a Pledge and Security, for that Assistance they ought to hope for from Her. 'Tis this servile and criminal Fear, which keeps all such Souls as she can get under her Power, in a Hell upon Earth, and which makes as many miserable, as she insinuates her self into their Imaginations. We ought to fear no other Misfortunes, but those that are inseparable from our Sins, 'tis impossible to be unhappy and innocent : A peaceable Conscience fills our Soul with Tranquillity.

If we make Uprighteousness the Rule of our Desires, She soon will free us from all Inquietudes ; and if our Duty justifies our Fears, She herself will make us conceive them without being surpriz'd. We ought to desire what is Good, and fear the Evil ; and God being the only desirable

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firable *Good*, and Ill the only Evil to be dreaded; we must without Intermission, sigh after one, and hate the other, if we intend to enjoy Tranquillity whilst living, and Happiness in dying. 'Tis a sad Reflection, to consider that supposing we have every thing here below at our Hearts Desire, we are Masters of nothing but what is transitory! God suffer'd the most ambitious of Princes to conquer the World, and scarce saw he Himself in Possession thereof, but he found himself also deceiv'd in his ambitious Imaginations, because they were soon enclos'd in a small space of Ground of 7 Feet in length, which serv'd him for a Grave. Some are eager after Riches; 'twas this that cost *Cresus* his Life and Glory; I say his Glory, because his Memory remains inglorious to Posterity. Fortune sold at so dear a Rate to *Cesar*, the Attempt he made to wear the Imperial Diadem of the World, that the first time he put it on his Head, he sunk under the Weight

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Weight thereof. Nero not satisfy'd with the Imperial Dignity, would needs appear on the Stage in the Quality of a *Comedian*; but he himself furnish'd sufficient Matter for a Bloody Tragedy, and after having diverted the People in his Life time, he gave 'em the Diversion of seeing the Spectacle of his Death. Many are desirous of a refin'd Wit, without considering that its Beauty consists in its Goodness, and this Goodness in that Light it may give us, to find out the Path that leads to Salvation.

Ladies wish for nothing, so much as for Beauty; not considering that it is attended by more Misfortunes, than any thing else in the World; All the Beauties of the Body are like Flowers in a Garden, which bid us Farewell almost as fast as we cast our Eyes upon them, and we can scarce view them above once in that Heighth of Lustre the Sun imparts to them. Among all the Gifts Nature can bestow upon us, none is more fatal than this, because

cause it is inseparable from all these Misfortunes, which always attend a great Beauty. He that speaks of a Beautiful Woman, speaks of an Unfortunate one, without she be endued with a peculiar Grace, both of Will and Thought, in avoiding those that pursue her. Let us desire nothing but God, let us fear nothing but Him, this is the only Way to enjoy Tranquillity in the midst of all the Inquietudes that are able to afflict us. The true Art of relishing the Pleasures of Life, consists in knowing which are the true Pleasures; and there being no other, than to please Him, who is the Author thereof, we must in all our Desires, as well as in our Fears, keep him in constant View, to fortify our Mind by this Divine Object, which renders all those that trust in Him, invincible.

Were the Miser throughly acquainted with the Nature of his Treasure, he would be so far from desiring them, that he would
change

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change his Desire into Hatred; But, how should he come to this Knowledge as long as he is blinded by the very Light of his own Reason, because he makes not the right Use of it. A long Series of Instances ought to convince his Senses by sensible Objects, for he walks over the Ashes of a vast Number of Rich Men, who dy'd with a vain Repentance of their Crimes, and went to the Grave dress'd in the same Black Garb of their avaricious Passions. If all these convincing Instances are not sufficient, I know not what to say to, or to do with them; they must dye with their Desires, which, since they were unlimited on Earth, nothing but Hell can put a Stop to them, since nothing but Hell can be the End of it. An ill Man will never be able to shelter himself against His Thunder-bolts, and all the Altars of Refuge will change both their Name and Nature, and become Altars of Expiation, where sinful Souls will for ever be expos'd
like

like Victims, to be sacrificed every Moment, without ever seeing an End of their Misery. He that passes away his Days in vain Desires, will be convinc'd, when he comes to his Journey's end, that he has slept away his Time, because his Life has bin no more than a Dream.

Supposing we have the Good Fortune to see all our Wishes accomplish'd, What Gainers shall we be by the Bargain? for since we can wish for nothing but what Fortune is able to give us, we shall be never the Richer in the Possession thereof. What Happiness can we propose to us here on Earth, as long as Fate has made it the Place of our Grave? Enquire of all the Rich Men that are dead, what Value they put upon their Riches now? They will tell you, That it amounts to no more than a Shrow'd, to be bury'd in. Is it worth our while, to take so much Pains, for so inconsiderable a thing! The best Way to check at once the natural Greediness

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ness of our Hearts, is to turn them towards Heaven, and to make that their Object, as it ought to be their Hopes; And, as Heaven is no less dreadful by the Noise of its Thunder-bolts, as it is stupendious by the Beauty of its Stars, let us hearken to the Voice of its Thunder, to conceive beforehand, what it is to announce us on the Day of Judgment, that so we may dispose our Mind, to such Thoughts as are suitable to the Terrour of that last Day of Times, when Eternity commences its Empire

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

TIS no difficult Task to prove, that even the Possession of whatever we can desire here below, first gives us a Distaste, and afterwards an utter Dislike 'Tis enough to enjoy every thing you have wish'd for, to cure you of your Love for them. 'Tis enough to know that we have them, to check our Eagerness of obtaining them. 'Tis

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'Tis a Quality peculiar to all transitory things, to disturb the same Heart that enjoys them; for, since they can't fulfil its avaricious Desires, which renew every Day, it forgets that it is in Possession of them; and this Forgetfulness creates new ones. But when we turn our Hearts to Heaven, instead of the Earth, and make God the only Object of our Desires, this avaricious and disquiet Heart changes its Nature all at once, and rejoices in its own Desires and Hopes, without the least Inquietude, because it can't conceive any thing beyond what it desires, nor hope for a greater Felicity, than what it is in Possession of already. 'Tis the same with Fear, this Passion gets such an Ascendant over our Soul, that we stand in fear of every thing.

We dread Poverty, Sicknefs, and a thousand other Misfortunes, which may befall us by God's Permission, to punish us by the Pains we endure, for the Offences we constantly commit against Him. But when our Fear has

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no other Object but Sins, in order to avoid committing of them, this Passion changes its Nature to our Advantage, because it at once gives us a Resolution to despise all the Misfortunes that may hereafter befall us, and enables us, to overcome those that for the present afflict us.

Judge what a Benefit it is to us, to desire nothing but God only, to have it in our Power to quench that Thirst in our Hearts, which makes us sigh always after transitory Pleasures; and represent to our Mind, what a Felicity it is, to fear nothing but to offend God; to be proof against all other Attempts of Fear, and to be able to look all Dangers, nay even Death it self in the Face, with an unchanged Countenance. This is the Reward God bestows upon such as Love and Fear him.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

All the Happiness of this World, consists in the Search after the Right Way of compassing the Felicity of the other.

THose, who search in vain after the Tranquillity of Life, are inexcusable in my Judgment, because every one may find it, whilst he is working towards his Salvation; and this very Work, and the Tranquillity of Life, being the same, in Respect both to the Object, and the End, we can't be unhappy whilst we are employ'd in that Work. What can be conceiv'd to be more delicious than to employ the Time of this always languishing Life in gaining a new one, which will prove Immortal? What greater Happiness can be imagined, than to find our selves engag'd in that *Great Work*, of making our selves happy to all Eternity? And what can be more Glorious, than to spend our Time in providing our selves with such Garlands, as its Incon-

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stancy is not able to fade, or take from us? 'Tis in this Employment alone, 'tis in this Work alone, 'tis in this Action alone, that consists the Felicity of Life. What can be more truly satisfactory than the Joy of an Innocent Life? What can be more charming or desirable, than that Tranquillity of Mind, which makes us think of nothing else but how to do our Duty? Our Heart is certainly never more at its Ease, then when it breaths the sweet Scent of a Good Life. I don't suppose this Truth to admit of any Contradiction, every Man may soon be convinc'd of it, since Reason it self, confirm'd by his own Experience, will make the most incredulous, sensible of it. We have nothing else to do but to perform our Duty, (thro' God's Grace) without being tired in it ; We need think only of that Felicity we look for, to be always happy ; and the only Way to live in Tranquillity, is to make ones Conscience to be at Ease. Those who are continually tired, and stop in the Course of their
Lives,

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Lives, as if they liv'd without thinking, are no less to be blam'd than those, that continually complain of the Evils they suffer, just as if they had quite forgotten the Evils they have committed. Our Life is of too vast Consequence to us, to pass it away without thinking of it; because it was bestow'd upon us, to employ it in the Search after Eternity; Complaints make a very ill Sound in the Mouth of a Christian, we must submit to the Law, and the Oracle that has given it, has commanded us to be silent.

How unhappy are those, who are Burthen some to themselves, they search in vain after themselves even when present, and that without ever finding themselves; And, as they live rather out of Necessity than Reason, they trail their Chains instead of carrying them; and overcharging the very Air they breath with their continual Sighs, their Death proves as miserable as their Life has bin before, without ever

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making due Reflection upon their Life or their Death. Neither are those more excusable, who prompted by their Impudence, rather becoming a Devil than a Christian, are dissatisfy'd, and will find fault with every thing, no otherwise than if they ow'd their Being to Chance ; they set up for a Reformation of the Disorders of the World, when their Life is a continued Scene of Confusion. To be discompos'd at every thing, is not the Way that leads to Tranquillity ; and we can't expect to be happy, without employing our Thoughts in compassing Felicity ; every one must, without ceasing, labour in the Establishment of his Happiness, in order to render its Foundation most solid and unshaken ; and if we expect our Labour to be crown'd with Success, we must continually persevere in it, because, should we desist but a Moment, that very Minute may produce our Destruction.

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Let no body be startled at the Troubles he is like to meet with, since they are counterpois'd by such Pleasures, as will make them insensible to us; or if we are sensible of them, they will carry along with them such Allaies and Enticements, as will make us love, instead of fearing them. How can we think our selves unhappy in treading in the Footsteps of Him, who has taken His Share in all our Miseries? Or how can our Hearts be sensible of Torments, whilst we follow the *God of sufferings* and the *Man of Pains*? The Misfortunes he thinks fit to send us, are so many Felicities, the Hand that gives them changes their Nature; and if we don't taste the Sweets that attend them, 'tis then only we may call our selves unhappy, 'tis our Insensibility makes us truly unhappy. When the Felicities of Heaven are not the Objects of our Desires, that Happiness we expect here on Earth, proves the Cause of our Inqui-

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tudes ; if our Mind be not full of Thoughts on our Salvation, our Heart will be void of Consolation, in those Dangers that presage our Destruction.

Tho' a great and good Soul does not act upon the Score of Interest, nevertheless, being animated by the Prospect of Glory, even Impossibilities seem to be easie to Her. 'Tis the same with those that have fix'd their Love on Eternity, they think it can never be purchas'd at too high a Rate, and therefore never think themselves happy, but when they are in Search after Means to obtain it ; and, as this their Happiness far out-ballances their Pain, they forget the last, that they may the better relish the first.

'Tis an undoubted Truth, that those who call themselves unhappy in running on in their Course of Life, whereof Heaven ought to be propos'd by them as their Reward, are actually unhappy, by reason of their insensibility ; because they both
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shut their Eyes against the Brightness of that Light, which ought to enlighten them, and continue insensible of the Sweets of those Hopes they ought to conceive. Is it not a Reproach to Christians professing the Faith, to see themselves out-done in their Faith by the *Macedonians*, who were Infidels, when they follow'd *Alexander* their King and General, animated by the Hopes of Conquests, for which they had no other Pledge nor Security, than his invincible Courage? The vast sandy Plains of *Asia*, in their most frightful Appearance, could not stop them; nor the numberless Rocks of the *Caspian* Sea, were not enough to keep them back, after they had taken a Resolution to surmount all Obstacles, and either to conquer or dye, since they would not lose their Hopes but with their Lives. What can we think of ourselves, when we take a right View of those unfortunate *Heroes*, who carry'd all their Fortune along with

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them? Shall we be fill'd with Sadness at the Approach of that Day, which is to bless us with everlasting Satisfaction? Shall we call our selves unhappy, whilst we are maintaining our just Pretensions to that Felicity, which shall be without End? Can we be disturb'd with Inquietudes, whilst we are attaining to that infallible Tranquillity, whereof God Himself is the Foundation? And must we give way to our Tongues to murmur against our Destiny, as if we call'd in question the Mercy of Him, who is the Author of these inviolable Laws? That young Monarch, who had no more than earthly things in his Disposal, sees himself attended by those of divers Nations, who with Pleasure follow him in great Numbers, through the most remote Parts of the World: And the Great Creator of the Universe, who has made Heaven our Reward, does not engage us to follow Him but with Reluctancy, with Tears, with Sighs and

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and Sobs. But I don't much wonder it should be so; A divided Heart has no true Master, we can't love Heaven and Earth at once. Unless we surrender it wholly to God, that small Part we keep to our selves is sufficient to incline our Will contrary to His, and this it is that causes our Misfortune. 'Tis in-vain to flatter our selves in respect to the Felicity of Life, we are sure never to meet with it in this World, unless we look for it in the other, by applying all our Thoughts, Care, and Actions, to acquire it; since even from these Endeavours we may reap the Advantage of our Tranquillity.

If it be true, that the ill Use we make of Riches, is the Cause of all the Misfortunes of our Life, we must then agree, that a rich Man wants continual Consolation, because they generally make so ill a Use of them, that without God's peculiar Mercy they stumble upon the Stone of Voluptuousness, which

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gives them a Mortal Fall. To be Rich and Happy! There is too great an incompatibility betwixt true Felicity and Riches, to see them go together; and the *First* and *Greatest* of all Men, chose Want and Poverty for his Share; not that it is impossible for a Rich Man to be saved; but unless he make use of Riches to gain Heaven only, he shall never come into it. How is it possible for us to think of the Pleasures of Heaven, as long as we relish those of the World, and imagine, that we can obtain its Felicities, without thinking of them? This is actually mistaking a Dream for a real Truth. The greatest Good Fortune we can wish for, is to have a Competency to act in that Station God has call'd us to; without lifting up our Eyes to what is above us, this being a Station reserv'd for another; we ought to be contented with such a Condition as God has bin pleas'd to bestow upon us, all the rest being not for
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our Good, and therefore we should draw a Curtain betwixt them and our ambitious Desires, that we may not be tempted by the Sight thereof. All the World hunts after Riches, thinking that will make them happy, and those that get them, are the most unhappy of all; I say, the most unhappy, because they run the Hazard of being Damn'd, and Damnation comprehends all the Misfortunes that can be imagin'd, tho' they are even beyond our Imagination. To live in Affluence of Fortune, is to lead from one Day to another, a Life happy and agreeable in Appearance, I say, in outward Appearance; its Felicities and Pleasures being only imaginary, since those that taste them, live but from one Moment to another, neither their Youth, nor healthy Constitution, being sufficient Pledges to secure them one Moment against Death.

Were we truly sensible of what a high Value Life is to us, we would
certainly

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certainly spend it in nothing else but doing Good, this being the Thing that will stick to us for ever. 'Tis in vain to turmoil our selves to obtain worldly Riches, they all stay behind us, and never was any one the richer in the Possession of them. This convinces us to our Shame, by woful Experience, that all the Paths of Fortune meet in our Destruction; because the most fortunate here on Earth, don't very often attain to the State of Salvation. Tho' there are divers Roads that may bring us to Heaven, it must nevertheless be confess'd, that the Path chosen by God Himself is the securest of all, tho' it be the most difficult, I mean the most difficult in outward Appearance; to understand its true Nature, we must consult the Secrets of our own Hearts. 'Tis in vain for us to meet with Success in all our Undertakings here on Earth, we do nothing unless we procure our Salvation, because without that, every thing

thing will prove useless to us. To have Fortune at ones Heels, to keep Fortune at Command, and to dispose of Her Favours at Pleasure; if these which are of the highest Rank can't make a Man happy, What Tranquillity can he propose to himself in the Possession of all the rest? Let us do what we will, we do nothing if we neglect to secure our Salvation. If you liv'd a Hundred Ages, and enjoy'd a daily Revenue of a Hundred Millions, all this would be no more than Chimera's, which can only satisfy our Imagination, *en passant*, because they are transitory only. A truly solid Mind, is known by its Thoughts; and all our Thoughts being useless, unless they have Eternity for their Object, or at least are continually directed to it, we in effect think of nothing. As every one in this World lives in Hopes of being saved, so he is actually dying whilst he is yet living, if he labours not without
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Intermission to obtain his Salvation. Let every thing have succeeded never so well according to our Wishes here, if we are deliver'd up to Eternity, without having us'd all our Endeavours in this Life, to attain to the other, we shall remain to Eternity, but it shall be to render our Misfortunes and Pains everlasting.

Nothing is more difficult, than for a Rich Man to be saved ; because his Riches entice him to follow the Path of Voluptuousness, and this so far fills his Mind with imaginary Pleasures, that he never thinks of the real ones ; and, what encreases his Misfortune is, that it will attend him from hence to all Eternity. To be always fortunate in this World, is in effect to stand always in need of Consolation ; because the greatest Felicitities here, are the infallible Fore-runners of the greatest Misfortunes. Nature never produced Roses without Prickles ; Every bright Day is succeeded

ceeded by Night ; and tho' the Sea is the Emblem of Inconstancy, this Changeableness is unalterable ; Necessity requiring fair Weather should be intermix'd with Tempests. Every Rich Man moves me to Compassion ; their Destiny seems so unhappy to me, that I am startled at the very Thoughts of it ; to be lull'd asleep in the Pleasures of this Life, and not to awaken till at the Agony of Death, to be damn'd to all Eternity ; this is the most dreadful Reflection that can be. All the World intreats Fortune for Riches, without considering that the Enjoyment thereof, is the cause of all the Misfortunes of Life ; to be truly Rich, you must despise all these things together.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

I *Think nothing can be more deplorable than the Account of our pass'd Riches at the Point of Death ;*
as

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as all these earthly Advantages are buried with us, so the Rehearsal thereof moves rather Pity than Admiration. If the Honours we enjoy, even whilst present, are nothing, judge what is to be said of our pass'd Glory.

All the Felicity of this World consists in searching after Means to acquire the Happiness of the other: Our Endeavours therein, are so agreeable, and the Difficulties we meet with so pleasing, that our Hopes are no less relishing than the Possession it self, because they are infallible.

Can any thing be more delightful, than to spend all ones Time in attaining to Eternity? This is the true lasting Felicity, this is the true Content; and all such as look for it any where else, will be disappointed for ever.

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

If we intend to live happy in this World, we must consider every Day as if it were our last, in constantly minding our Duty, because each Moment may be the last of our Life.

THose who repose in their Happiness here below, are doubtless unmindful, that the World is like a Goal full of Prisoners condemn'd to Death, by an irrevocable Sentence, who expect every Moment to be that of their Execution. Time conducts to the Grave by the Path mark'd out by Providence, and tho' it carries in its Hand the Watch which shews the Duration of our Time, it does not mark the Minute that is to be the last. Under this Uncertainty of the exact Time of an infallible Death, we can't attain to the true Tranquillity of Life, unless by being regardless of it ; because this Neglect of our
Life

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Life renders the Path we are to walk so smooth, that we go forward with Pleasure, and we come to our Journey's End with Satisfaction. For, Is it not a great Satisfaction, to procure our Happiness in doing our Duty? And can any thing be more delightful, than following ones Destiny in following the Path of Virtue? Or can any thing be more engaging, than to obey God's Commands, and the Rules prescrib'd us by Justice, without setting aside our own Interest? Since the Reward of that Duty we discharge our selves of in paying Obedience both to God and Reason, is no less than eternal Glory, We are very solicitous to know what good or ill Fortune is likely to befall us, when every one may calculate his own Nativity. Those who weigh their Actions by the Ballance of Justice, need not be apprehensive of its Rigour; but as all the several Roads that lead to Glory, meet at Her Throne, so the different Ways of Voluptu-

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luptuousness bring us to Precipices:
A Good Life, thro' the Merits of
Christ, makes a Happy one.

I mean, let a Man be as great
as his Ambition could wish him to
be, all his Grandure won't make up
his Felicity. He may indeed satisfy
his Senses by the Pomp of his
Attendance; but he can't remove
the Inquietudes that disturb his
Mind: The Envy his Magnifi-
cence creates to the World, will
soon change into Compassion, un-
less 'tis true Glory he has made his
Object. The want of Riches, is
much more beneficial to us, than
the Enjoyment of them, unless we
use them to a good Purpose; and
seeing that Mercy of making a good
Use of them, is never given to those
that have acquir'd them by ill
Means, this ill Use they make of
them, is the Beginning of their
Punishment in their unjust Posses-
sions, whilst God reserves the fur-
ther Punishment of them to Him-
self, in Hell. There is a great
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Difference betwixt what Good we do, and betwixt what Goods or Possessions we acquire: The first proves our Comfort, by the Remembrance it leaves within us, and the Hope it gives us; the last, our Affliction, by the Care that attends, and by the Pain that succeeds them. We ought to be Rich in good Works, because these can (thro' the Merits of Christ) enrich us for ever. Gold and Silver we must leave behind us here on Earth, which has produc'd them, they being Part of its natural Substance. If a Man guilty of many Sins should see all his Wishes accomplish'd, he would still continue unhappy, because he would still be sinful; and the very Remembrance of these Ills he has committed, would not suffer him to relish his good Fortune; For, as the Tranquillity of the Soul does not depend on his Riches, they can contribute nothing towards it, this must be his own Work, and ought to be the more valu'd.

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valu'd by us, since at the End thereof we find also the End of our Desires, because we have nothing to wish for beyond it. It is a strange kind of Blindness, to love Life at so high a Rate, and at the same time not to think of its short Continuance. Even whilst we are counting the Hours by the Clock, whilst we are looking in our Almanack, the time passes away without our taking notice of it ; and being once gone, 'tis in vain to think of it, because it never returns. Not, but that there is some Satisfaction in growing old ; but a long Life, unless it be attended by Tranquillity, can be acceptable to none, and its Tranquillity must have its Origin from the Repose of our Mind ; we must Labour incessantly to obtain that, if we propose to be Happy. I can't but despise those Moral and Politick Maxims, which tell us, We ought to be contented with what we enjoy, if we are not in a Capacity of obtaining

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obtaining more. This Argument seems too weak for me, not to raise my Thoughts higher than so. A Man may be contented with his present Condition, but this Content ought to be owing to another Principle than Necessity, because the lesser or higher Degree of Satisfaction, can add nothing to our Repose, if it be not the Product of our Conscience. Good or ill Fortune, are things indifferent to a Good Man; he lives from one Day to another without thinking one his own, and so the Days of Plenty, and the Days of Scarcity are equally welcome to him, all his Thoughts are taken up in pursuing the right Path he walks in, to see his Pains rewarded after he has finish'd his Course.

I am not so much surpriz'd that the Pleasures of the Body more sensibly affect us, than those of the Soul, because our Senses have the first Trial of them; but Reason being much more to be rely'd on than they, a reasonable Man may
always

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always be convinc'd, that the last are attended with such Delights as beyond all Comparison, far surpass the others. Bodily Pleasures (tho' never so different) are all of the same Stamp, in Respect either of their false Appearances, or in Reference of the Bitterness that attends them, because they always leave behind them a certain Remorse of having mistaken them for true ones. 'Tis quite otherwise with the Pleasures of the Soul; those are always the same, either in Respect of their Unchangeableness, or in Reference of the Sweets that always attend them; But, as that of the Repose of our Mind, is the most accomplish'd of all, as having a Virtue of allaying the Hurricanes of our Passions, we ought to long for nothing so much as to obtain it, being convinc'd, that its Defect is the Cause of all our Inquietudes.

What can be more beneficial to us in this World, than to have nothing to wish for that belongs to it;

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it; Is it not being actually contented, to see all ones Desires, accomplish'd, and all ones Hopes brought to a Period? This is the happy Destiny that enjoys the Repose of his Conscience, because he looks upon every thing with the same Eye, with the same Face, and without changing his Countenance; because, say I, a Mind well fix'd, and a constant Heart, hears good and bad News, without being overjoy'd at the first, or dejected with Trouble at the last.

This is the glorious Lot of those Souls, who guided by the same Light of Mercy and Reason, never go astray from the Path of Righteousness, whilst they are making the best of their Way to the Grave; and as, whilst they are drawing near to Death, they have always Eternity in View, where they shall enjoy Satisfaction and Peace, their Conscience gives them beforehand, a Taste of those Sweets they are to enjoy in full Plenty hereafter. I
would

would not in this Point have the Reader rely alone upon the Strength of Reason, I could wish rather, he would be convinc'd by his own Experience of this Truth, which will leave him not the least room to doubt of it; Let him but make Trial of what I have said, for a Moment, and that single Minute of enjoying that Tranquillity will make him dread his Inquietudes for ever after. As the Desire of our Salvation is the only Object that can fill our Souls with Joy, so the Dread of Damnation ought to be the only thing that should fill our Hearts with Fear and Horror; and 'tis in Respect also of this True Maxim, we ought to put a high Value upon the Repose of our Mind, because it makes us at once sensible of the Hopes of our Salvation, and diminishes the Apprehension of our eternal Loss. 'Twas upon this Score St. *Austin* pray'd to God, to grant him His Mercy, to love him with all his Heart for one Moment

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only, knowing he should carry that Love along with him into his Grave. We must begg the same Mercy from God, *viz.* The Enjoyment of the Tranquillity of our Conscience, for as little as he shall think fit, because during that Time, tho' never so short, we shall be convinc'd, that there is no Way of living contentedly without fearing Him, nor of dying happily without Loving Him. All the Disorders of our Life proceed from our being mistaken in its true Nature ; not, that a Man can be ignorant, that he is Mortal ; but he makes so seldom due Reflection upon that Truth, and that only as it were by the by, that the Time of his Life slides away, and he finds himself at the End of his Career, which he has thus finish'd to his Shame, and repents in vain of his Miscarriages.

I can't imagine how Examples should serve much more for our Instructions, than good Precepts ; we see every Day such as are much
younger

younger than we dye before us, but are never the wiser for it; and so it happens to our great Misfortune, that the last and most fatal Experience must instruct us to no purpose, since the Light it gives us, is not strong enough to penetrate through that Cataract that has taken away our Sight, unless it be at the very last Minute of our Life. Were we secure to live for an Age, and at the same time not insensible of what Satisfaction it is to do well, we would not lose one Moment in doing so; and considering we don't know how long we have to live, and are sensible of it, it must rather be for want of Reason than good Will, we should not secure our selves against the Fear of the State of Damnation, since, beyond that, we have nothing else to dread. The Uncertainty we are under of the Continuance of our Life, is a fine School for those to be taught in, who are capable of reflecting duly upon the Matter, to their own Advantage,

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by avoiding that irreparable Loss that may befall them. He that makes it his Study how to live, will soon be a good Proficient in the Art of dying; and having gain'd this Point, we need wish for no more, either in this or the World to come. We need not look upon our Watches, nor in our Almanacks, to put us in mind of our Mortality; the Breath we draw frequently puts us in mind of it: But, I wonder, that, since it is so convincing, it should not make us more sensible. Every one of our Senses takes, as it were, their leave of us (by turns) almost every Moment; And seeing we find every Moment their Vertue and Strength to fail gradually, ought not this Decay engage us to be beforehand with them, to let our Soul bid them farewell first, that She may relish them without Regret?

Such as dye before Death comes, never dye; and we can't exempt our selves from the Grave, after we are dead, unless we go thither whilst
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we are living : Not, but that we must dye as others do, and be buried as they are ; but our Death changes its Name by changing its Nature : Our Grave will be to us instead of a Cradle, for, being sow'd in Corruption, we shall be reviv'd in Glory. The only Way to be saved, is, to think continually on our Salvation ; and these Thoughts being always useful to us, the rest discover their own Vanity themselves ; because they dye at the first Moment of their Conception. Those that are Slaves to the World, carry their Chains along with them to the Grave, and thence to Hell, to render their Servitude everlasting ; the only Way to avoid this, is, to stick always close to our Duty, whereof Reason being the Tye, our Endeavours are so Just, that when Time shall deliver us, in order to deliver us up to Eternity, we shall be link'd with the same Tye to Him, who is the Author of it.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

I Can't reflect upon the Blindness of this World, without being mov'd to Compassion, their Actions are so strange and odd, they talk always without knowing what they say; they labour continually, without knowing for what; they move on, without intermission, not considering whether they are to go.

May it not reasonably be concluded, that the greatest Part of Mankind know not what they say? They talk of nothing but buying and selling their Commodities, as if a Man could attain to Happiness, by such a Traffick as this; would not one imagine, that they are ignorant of what they are a doing, when they spend their Time in acting quite contrary to that Duty, which of Necessity they must discharge, if they intend to be sav'd. And, who can question but that they never consider to what Place they are going, since, tho' they draw every Hour nearer to the Grave, they
don't

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don't care to hear any body speak of Death, just as if it were not inevitable.

Every one talks of what concerns him ; we have no other Concern but that of our Salvation, we are always busie, let us make good Choice of our Business, that it may turn to a good Account ; we are upon the Road towards Death, let us always have in View what we ought to aim at, at the End of this fatal Course, to see whether we can carry off the Prize ; all the rest is useless, all our other Labours are in vain, and all our other Thoughts without Effect.

Our Life being nothing but a continual Death, we must always be fit for dying, and that so much the more, because we dye no more than once, and, that the last Moment of our Life, either gives or takes from us the Crown of Eternity.

C H A P. XII.

We need only to consider how to live well, that we may dye well; because in this Consideration consists the Felicity of our Life.

A Travellers Thoughts ought to be taken up with a due Consideration how to come safely to his Journey's End; and, since our Travels are directed no where else, but to the Grave, we must at every Step we make, keep in View the End of our Course, to render it the less difficult, by the Hopes of bringing it to a happy Period. I am sensible it is not very easie to taste the Sweets of an agreeable Repose, whilst we are continually in Action, and that we can't meet with that Tranquillity we look for here below, whilst we are treading that difficult Path; but we ought to consider, That our very Endeavours of acquitting our selves of our Duty, is so agreeable, that the
Satisf-

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Satisfaction we take in it counterballances the Pain ; because there is no less Pleasure in doing Good, than there is in receiving the Reward of it. As the Huntsman relishes his Pleasure of following the Prey by his Eagerness of taking it, so the Hopes of putting a check to and conquering of our Passions make the Delight of our Life ; If our strongest Passion is, to keep us close to the World, our greatest Satisfaction ought to proceed from that Resolution we take of subduing it, and that the more, because the further we remove our selves from it, the nearer we approach to our desir'd Felicity ; and the more we despise what the World can give us, the more we raise our selves above it, and this Degree of Exaltation makes the Foundation of our Repose.

I think nothing can be more rational, than to consider of what we are doing, in order to do well ; so, that if all the World is desirous of a happy Death, and that this must be

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preceeded by a Happy Life, 'tis in vain for us to wish for either, if we have not made a due Reflection upon both ; Our Life can't be happy unless by that Felicity we propose to end it happily, and 'tis the End, that must crown all our Actions. What benefit would it be to us, if we should walk always upon Roses, if the Prickles wound our Feet ? Is it not much more proper to gather and tie them up into a Nose-gay, to be reviv'd by their odoriferous Scent whilst it lasts, and remember it after it is pass'd ? The sweet Scent of an innocent Life is so delicious, that it penetrates by an almost Divine Vertue into the very Heart ; and makes us relish such Pleasures, as are not to be represented but by our Thoughts.

There is no other Paradise upon Earth, but that of a Good Life, in order to dye happily ; all the other Pleasures have only the bare Name, being altogether imaginary. The Enjoyment of Health, is always

ways attended with a certain Inquietude, caus'd by our Fear of being Ill ; Let us be never so fortunate, as we are beholding for it to Time, its infallible Changeableness makes us fore-see, in the midst of our Enjoyments, our Misfortune of being depriv'd of them. We ought therefore to wean our selves from that Love we bear to any thing here below, because we have only the Use of it for a Time, and the good Use we make of our Time having a constant Relation to Eternity, every Moment of it ought to be equally precious to us ; and that the more, because the last of our Life makes us either happy or unhappy. Don't we observe our Lungs to be like a Watch which shew the Minutes every time they breath, till the Clock of our last Hour strikes, to call us away, which, for that we know, may be the present. I don't wonder that Providence thought fit to order it so, She thought fit to leave the
Time

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Time of our Departure hence unknown to us, that we might be always ready to depart. What a Satisfaction is it, to be at all Times taken up in making Preparations for our Departure, without fixing our Thoughts on any thing else ! Don't imagine the Thoughts thereof to be attended with Sadness, an Innocent Soul meets in them with her Satisfaction, because they tend to Her Benefit. What can be thought of that is more agreeable, or more beneficial, than spending ones Time in gaining Eternity. We go on with Pleasure, when, after Reason has shewn us the Way we must take, She enlightens our Steps. Don't fear the Danger, you need not fear any thing whilst you are under the Conduct of Providence. If the Road seems troublesome to Day, you have Reason to hope it may prove better to Morrow ; for in keeping on constantly in your Road, you may meet with a more agreeable Climate and Country. The

'The Sun's no less to be admired at the time of his Rising, than at his Setting, and if by the Changeableness of Time he is covered with Clouds now and then, this proves no Diminution to his Lustre, because that is natural to him. 'Tis just so with a good Soul, you see her go forward with an even Pace towards the Grave, where she is to finish her Career; and let Fortune attempt to disturb her Repose, She remains immoveable, and stands firm on that Foundation, She herself has fix'd in the Pursuit of Virtue. Let our Life be never so long, it appears to be so short, after it is past, that we dare scarce think of it; So true is it, that we ought to esteem it only like a Dream: We make but a very ill Use of our Reason, if we keep always in one Pace, without considering what Place we are to go to, since our Stay there is to continue for ever; Since our Life ends in Death, by a Necessity, the Laws whereof are inviolable;

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We must certainly bid farewell to our Reason, if we can be so neglectful as not to remember our Condition to be mortal and punishable. The Sun by his Light shews us every Day our Road, from the Cradle to the Grave; not that we stand in need of a Guide in a Path we can't miss of; but God permits, that, whilst we are treading in the doleful Footsteps of those that are gone before us, our Mind should be convinced of its voluntary Frailties, by the Testimony of our Senses, as often as we become forgetful of what we are. You will say, how is it possible we should forget it? We are daily invited to the Funerals of our Relations and Friends, till others come to ours: But, 'tis very requisite we should consider, that it is not enough for us to know that our Death is infallible, but that it is absolutely necessary also; we should represent to our selves, that that Death which is to succeed it, will be everlasting.

lasting to us, unless we do our utmost endeavour to avoid it.

Life cannot be pleasing to us, if not attended with sensible Hopes of a happy Death. I say sensible Hopes, by doing our best Endeavours to attain to it; and we shall never succeed in this, except we make that happy Death the sole Object, both of all our Thoughts and of all our Actions. All the World is fond of a long Life, but to live longer or shorter, signifies nothing; If, whilst we live, we discharge our Duty, a long Life is a long Account, we must cast up with the more Exactness, because it is to be done before a Judge, where no Corruption takes place. I am sensible I shall find it a hard Task, to persuade you, that the Thoughts of our End have more of Sweet than Bitter in them; but, if we but represent to our selves, that our Life is Momentaneous, and that during that small time of its Duration, we must expect the Decision of

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our everlasting well or ill Living, it follows absolutely that a rational Man must take Delight in thinking on that, whereon his Salvation depends. If he is so unfortunate as to doubt of it, let him suffer himself to be convinced by the undeniable Testimonies of those that die before him, and he will learn from their last Words, that the Felicity of Life consists in thinking of Death. Every Body exclaims against the Disobedience of our first Parents, because thereby their Posterity was deprived of those Advantages God had design'd them: But God, whose Justice and Mercy are both infinite, has thought fit to impart to every one the same Favour of letting them live in the new Paradise of this World, under this new Restriction, not to transgress his Commands, they being so many forbidden Fruits. And what great Reason of Complaint have we now? Knowing the Errors committed by our first Parents, this Knowledge ought

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to instruct us, the Example of their Chastisement, rendring this Instruction absolutely necessary to us. He that either submits to, or transgresses God's Laws, will have his Reward or Punishment accordingly; and 'tis in this, God makes us sensible of his infinite Mercy, because after he had by his own Blood wash'd away the Spots of the Sin of our first Parents, he would have their Posterity enjoy the Liberty and Privilege of a Free-will, that so, after having satisfy'd his Justice, they might be obliged to his Mercy for their Salvation.

Every one by God's Grace may live in the Paradise of this World, in the same primitive Innocence as our first Parents did, they may feed upon all the Fruits God has planted, provided they forbear those he has forbidden them to touch.

It belongs to us to reap the Benefit of the Misfortunes of others; by avoiding to stumble upon the same Stone that crush'd others before:

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fore: Since we live now in the Paradise of the World, let us submit to those Laws that are prescribed to us, that we may meet with Life in Death. If the Thoughts thereof trouble us, let us consider it as the necessary Means to obtain our Sovereign Felicity, so our Hearts will sigh without Intermission, after that Happiness they hope for, and will admit of nothing but himself who has given them their Being. When once we live for Eternity's sake, this Life will not be troublesome to us, and it is the most satisfactory Contentment, to finish one's Course with the Hopes of seeing our selves recorded in the End. Those who doubt, whether there be a Hell, need consult only their own Consciences. The constant Disturbance they meet with there, will teach them, that the Torments of the Damn'd are of the same Nature, because they continue for ever, without seeing that all-reven-
ging Hand that inflicts them. Every
Sinner

Sinner makes his Sins his Hell, and without either Executioner, or Execution, finds himself every Hour seized with a kind of Death more dreadful than Death it self. 'Tis not enough to think of doing well; Hell contains a vast Number of such as have conceived many good Designs, and who dy'd even with a Will of putting them in Execution. 'Tis our Works that shall be rewarded, through the Merits of Christ; not, but that a fervent Desire of Amendment, join'd to a sensible Repentance of our past ill Actions, may be acceptable to God, even when we want Means to put them in Execution; but if we let slip these Opportunities that are offer'd to us, this serves to make our Offence the greater; and our Will after such a Neglect is insufficient alone to satisfy God's Justice, which looks upon the Effects, and not upon the Words; these stand us in no stead. What frail Thoughts, what vain Desires, don't Men conceive daily, in relation to a happy

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Life! But Paradise is not to be obtained by the Zeal of our Will, we must purchase it by our Actions, 'tis these that deserve to be rewarded. 'Tis true, our Will must preceed our Actions, and we have gain'd a great Point upon our selves, when we take a final Resolution of doing our Duty; but unless this Will justifies it self every Moment, by our Inability of putting it in Execution, this Retardment is a new Sin, which draws upon our Head a new Punishment. To be always willing to do well, and to be able to do it, without doing it, is to heap Sin upon Sin to our Confusion, and our Punishment will be infallible. 'Tis not sufficient to have good Thoughts, 'tis not enough to have a good Will, we must not stop here; Paradise is not the Reward of Thoughts nor Intentions; we must put our Hand to the Plough, we must finish our Course, if we expect to be crown'd in the End.

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We labour for no body else, but for our own Benefit only; This Happiness is so charming, that which way soever we consider it, we are convinced in our own Sentiments, that one Day it will be our utmost Reward; It not only ravishes with Joy that Mind which bends its Thoughts upon it, but it also fills a Heart which sighs after it, with fresh Charms and Pleasures at every Moment. That Man that lives with no other Intent than to do his Duty, lives an immortal Life, nay, a Life that participates more of what is Heavenly than Mortal; for in living thus, he fixes himself in a Paradise here below, the Felicities whereof are pass'd all Expression. Happy is he, who can speak of it, by his own Experience, he needs wish for nothing else. Never any one who enter'd the Path, in pursuit of Virtue, was seen to turn his Back to her; If it happens that you see some turn from her on the Road,

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after having for some time traced her Steps, you need not be much surprized thereat, because they follow'd her doubtless for their own, rather than for Virtues sake; and so their Object was contrary to their Actions. The Pursuit of Virtue is so glorious, that we must rather be destitute of Reason, than of a good Will, not to make it everlasting; and to love Virtue with all one's Heart, but for one Moment, is sufficient to make us love her for ever; she never made an inconstant Lover, for as Knowledge preceeds Love, so those that are once perfectly well acquainted with her, will love her to Perfection.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

TO those who never think of Death, it appears so terrible at first Sight, that I don't wonder if they tremble for fear; but when by the Strength, rather of our Reason than of our Courage,
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we have made Death familiar with us, by always thinking of him, we remove his dreadful Shape, and make him appear so agreeable, that were we permitted to wish for him, we should rather sigh for Love, than for Fear of him.

No Man can ever relish the Sweets of Life, unless he thinks of the Bitterness of Death, if we can hardly be induced to believe this Truth, let us consider within our selves, that Death has his Inducements as well as Life; and that the last cannot be pleasing to us, without assured hopes, that the first will be happy to us: Wherefore if we intend to be always happy, we must always think of him.

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C H A P.

C H A P. XIII.

*All our Study ought to be to attain
to the Science of our Salvation,
in order to live contentedly, and
die happily.*

ALL the Sciences of this World are nothing but Vanity, we must set them aside, after we have been instructed in them, to recommence our Studies in the School of Virtue, this being the only that can teach us the way to our Salvation. 'Tis in vain to turn over a great many Books, that of Heaven is the most Beneficial to us; and those that spend their Time in the Contemplation of its Miracles, always visible, and always incredible, may justly call themselves learned.

You Astrologers; your Science is
useless to a good Man, his Probity
makes

makes his Horoscope. You Divines; He that lives and dies in the Faith of Christ and his Church, knows the best Precepts you can give him. You Philosophers; you are soon silenced by a wise Man, in your Argumentations, because he has learn'd to argue for no other End, than to follow the Dictates of Reason. You Mathematicians; you can't deny but that the Rule of living well, is more exact than your Rule and Compass of Proportion. You Lawyers; Justice being nothing else but a firm and continued Will, of giving every body what is his due, he that loves his Neighbour like himself, puts in Practice that same Law you teach, without having frequented your Academies. You Physicians; the Art of preserving the Health of the Soul, has the Preference to that of curing the Diseases of the Body.

These Maxims teach us, that 'tis the Knowledge of living well, makes us learned both in this and the other

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ther World, because it is the Science of Eternity. What good will it do us, if we are foretold by the Rules of Astrology what Misfortunes may befall us, if we can't avoid that of our Damnation? As all the Divinity we are required to know is comprehended in God's Commandments, we need only believe and obey, to make our selves great Divines, without spending much Study in that Science. True Philosophy consists in despising every thing that belongs to the World, this neglect being much more beneficial than their Knowledge. We shall reap much greater Advantages in following the Rules of our Duty, than the Maxims of Mathematicians. Our Benefit will be much greater, if we walk in the Paths of Justice, than if a Man commences Doctor of the Laws; and let a Physician boast never so much of his Experience, it will be much more glorious to us, to cure the Frailties of our Minds,
than

than to ease the Pains of our Bodies.

Let us further consider, that if Astrology foretels us the good and ill Fortune of our Life, by the different Aspects of the Stars, our Conscience makes us feel the effects of it, by its Repose, and by its Disquiet. Divinity teaches us the Attributes of God, 'tis sufficient to know that he is infinitely Just and Merciful, to hope for his Mercy, and dread his Justice. Philosophers may enlighten our Minds by the Knowledge of the Wonders of this World, but 'tis better for us to know its Miseries, than Perfections, to keep us from setting our Hearts upon it. All the Mathematicians in the World are not capable of teaching us how to measure that little Space betwixt Life and Death; this would be a thing worthy and beneficial to be known, that we might not be surpris'd at the minute of our Departure. He that does Wrong to no body, may
call

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call himself a learned Lawyer whether he has studied the Law or not. We ought to make use of Physick for the Preservation and Recovery of the Health of our Bodies ; but this transitory Life was given us, to obtain an everlasting one.

All the Doctors of Divinity, of the Laws, and of Physick, are ignorant Men, if they are ignorant in the Art of our Salvation ; This Knowledge, as it has no less than Eternity in view, it makes us in time forgetful of all the rest. All Sciences have Truth for their Object, and, as, after we are dead, we shall know no other than that of our Salvation, or of our Destruction, we must avoid the last, by never ceasing to think of the former. *St. Paul* was enlightned beyond any other Man upon Earth, in his Elevation into the Third Heaven ; and here we ought to observe, that the first Lesson he gave, was to look for all our Glory in the Cross, and
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shews us by his own Example, that our Sufferings are an infallible means to bring us to the Port of Eternity. Our Saviour himself shew'd us the Way, when he ascended Mount *Calvary*. If it be true, that a wise Man will never put what he can lose but once, to a Chance, ought not then the very Thought of committing our Salvation to the Hazard of Fortune, be more dreadful to us, than Hell it self, since the Danger you undergo, and the Evil that follows are past Reprieve and incurable.

You Mathematicians, in vain do you labour to find out the Quadrature of the Circle; all your Labour will come to nothing, unless you make use of the Cross: He that suffer'd himself to be crucify'd, has left infallible Rules behind him. You Lawyers, know that the Disciples of the Cross are much better learned in the Laws than you are, because they practise the Precepts prescribed to them by Justice herself.

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self. You Physicians, your Prescriptions are useless to those that make Profession of carrying the Cross; for this is the true *Dittamy* for their Wounds, and the Sovereign Remedy against all their Evils.

We ought to confine our Knowledge to what is necessary to our Salvation, all the rest is no more than a Fable, which make us ashamed when we are at the point of Death, of having fill'd our Heads with nothing but vain Sciences, which we have not learn'd without a great deal of Pains, but very little Profit. You learned Men of this World, all your Arguments will serve only to prove your Weakness, if you don't submit to Truth, and confess that you have nothing you can call your own, but Ignorance, Sin, and Death; and these three being the Products of Darkness, which inseparably attend them, you die in your Blindness, unless you own your Error with a sub-

submissive Heart, it being otherwise inexcusable. So soon as the Soul is separated from the Body, she remembers nothing but the Good and Evils she has done, because she must be rewarded for one, and punish'd for the other, to all Eternity. And since the last Moment of our Life, determines our Fate, our best Study is, how to make the best use of our time, since all our Felicities or Misfortunes depend upon the use we make of it. All the Knowledge of Life consists in leading a good Life; what Advantage will it be to speak several Languages, if we are ignorant of the Language of Reason. Hell is overstock'd already with those unhappy Doctors, who have follow'd no other Precepts, but those of their own Vanity, the Art of procuring our Salvation, has the Preference to all other Sciences.

'Tis more glorious to frequent the Churches than the Schools, and the best Study is *Oratory*. 'Tis this
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that in our Solitude may stand us in good stead, to make our Prayers serve us in lieu of Lessons, to instruct us, that we ought to seek but for one Truth in this World, and that is, its Vanity, every thing being nothing but imaginary, and in appearance, except Sin, Death, and Pain, which are inseparable. Our Aversion to what is ill, and our Love of what is *Good*, may render us very well skill'd in the Practice of those Habitudes we never contracted before; not, that we are debarr'd from frequenting the Schools, or making use of Domestick Precepts, to instruct us in the Profession we are design'd for, but the chief Profession being Christianity, we must preserve its Character in its true Purity, because it is to die along with us. When we are at the Point of Death, we shall not be ask'd, whether we studied the Laws with Success, but rather whether we have done Justice to every body. As the
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Knowledge of living upright comprehends all the other Sciences at once; so a Man who dyes, being Master only of that, may truly call himself a knowing Man. All the worldly Sciences commonly fill our Minds with Vanity, rather than with any true Knowledge. Therefore let us study nothing else but the Science, how to procure our Salvation, this being the way to make us knowing both in this and the other World.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

TO dye well, we ought to study how to live well; this is the Science leading to Eternity, all the rest are vain and unprofitable. He that knows how to love God above all things, and his Neighbour like himself, knows every thing, we need to be instructed in to our Salvation.

C H A P. XIV.

*The Happy Life, and solid Tranquillity
of a just Man.*

HOW happy is the Life, of a Righteous Man ! How infinite his Tranquillity ! Judge of the Solidity of the last, since God himself lays the Foundation of it ; and consider the Felicity of the first, you may compare it to the Life of Angels ; what can be conceived more agreeable or more glorious in the Pursuit of Virtue, than to taste all her Pleasures, and have all her Rewards here, to keep in the Possession of them to all Eternity ? This is the real Destiny of a just Man. His Object being what is *Good*, and his Aversion what is *Ill*, his Soul enjoys that Tranquillity which she has acquired to her self, being insensible of her Passions, except when she triumphs over them. Not but that he is sensible of Pain, but he

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remains deaf to the Temptations of Voluptuousness ; not but that he is always struggling with Fortune, but his Hopes of obtaining the Victory over-ballancing the Pains he takes, during the Combat, he reaps Tranquillity as the Fruits of his Labour, and during his Imaginary Inquietudes, is sensible of a true Contentment. Every thing smiles to his Desires, because his Desires are confined within the Bounds of Justice ; every thing succeeds according to his Wishes, because they never exceed the Bounds of Reason, and his Attempts in this kind are always attended with Success, because his preceeding Submission prepares the way for it. Let Fortune turn its Wheel which way it will, it turns to his Advantage, which is the greater, the more he thinks it to be real. Time may change its Face, it is agreeable to him, he looks upon it with an unchanged Countenance. He relishes Sickness as well as Health, because his

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Illness makes him exercise his Patience; whatever Affliction befalls him, either by Loss of his Possessions, or of his Relations, he himself pronounces that Judgment which Providence has given according to its Sovereign Will, he comforts himself, and constrains Nature to be contented with those Tears she makes him shed, because he has nothing more to give her. Let his Station be what it will, he studies nothing so much as how to discharge his Duty, and find his Repose in it. Having no other Object in view than what is *Good*, this is his only Reward in this World, in hopes that the same will crown his Works in the World to come. A greater or lesser Share of the Gifts of Fortune does not make up his Tranquillity, being contented with what he enjoys, and without carrying his Projects beyond his own Sphere, he endeavours all he can to fill it up, that no *Vacuum* may be found in that Orb, God has been
pleased

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pleased to assign him ; knowing that is allotted to him by the Sovereign Power of Providence ; if he finds himself surpriz'd by Necessity, he looks upon it without knowing it ; he is not sensible of it, because he never wants what is necessary : And, tho' there be but a momentaneous Interval betwixt his Plenty and Scarcity, he hopes to be always contented.

Supposing he is over-burthened with a numerous Family ; and that the Misfortunes of their Lives render his Industry Fruitless, for their Subsistence ; as he is not Ignorant that he who has charg'd him with this Burthen, has weigh'd it, before he laid it upon his Shoulders, he fears not to sink under its weight ; but says with *Job*, after he had been abandon'd by his Wife, that he will confide in God, even in his Despair. A Righteous Man speaks in the same Words ; not but that Hope is the main Security of his Future Good

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Sentence, but let this Future Expectation be never so overcast with Darkness, he dispels the Clouds by the Light of his Faith, which renders the *Good* he desires, as if it were present to him; so that he enjoys beforehand those Felicities he desires, because he knows them to be infallible. In this Innocent way of Living, he grows Old with so much delight, that he numbers the Hours of his Days, with the utmost Satisfaction, looking for the Minute of his Departure without impatience; and as he takes leave of the World every Minute, by breaking those Ties which might detain him either in Thought or Will, he discovers by degrees that desirable Haven, whither time is to carry him, to deliver him up to Eternity.

M o-

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

I Can scarce imagine, that any one can call the Existence of Hell and Heaven in Question, because the Troubles and Repose of our Consciences, make us sufficiently sensible of the Torments of the first, and the Pleasures of the last; and the Generality of the World being an Evidence in behalf of it, it must be taken for unquestionable.

A just Man has the advantage of tasting beforehand the Pleasures of that Paradise he expects to enjoy, by that satisfaction the Tranquillity of his Conscience imparts to his Soul. All his wishes being centred in God, and finding God every where; he sees, in seeing him, all the Desires he could conceive, accomplish'd. An impious Man on the other hand, has the Misfortune to feel before-hand the Torments of Heaven, wherewith his Sins threaten him; as his Conscience is

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never at rest, so it keeps him constantly in Hell, God permitting that it should be at once his Punishment and Executioner. This obliges me to admonish my Reader, to lead a blameless Life, if he hopes to enjoy Felicity in this World, and Glory in that which is to come.

CH A P. XV.

Containing some Reflections upon this Treatise, to improve it to our Advantage.

SINCE all the Happiness of Life Consists in a Happy Death, our Thoughts, Words, and Actions ought to have no other Object than how to Live well, that we may Dye well. All that our Imagination is capable of conceiving, is nothing but Pain and Trouble, unless we make Eternity
our

our whole Delight. A Million of Ages, nay, a Hundred Millions of Ages added to them, of Felicity must have an End, because we count the Minutes of them; but when we Reflect upon an Eternity of Happiness, upon an Eternity of Glory, upon an Eternity of Repose, we must certainly not understand or deny our own Interest, if we despise the Possession of all these things, which are to be Everlasting. One thinks of nothing but Riches, and his Riches pass away like a Dream, because he can't carry them along with him to the Grave. Another devotes himself to Fortune, to ascend to the highest Pinnacle of Dignity she is able to give; and the same Moment he enjoys them; the next succeeding ends the Enjoyment by some sudden accident. A Thousand Years are like nothing when they are gone, and since every thing is Transitory, let us fix our Mind inseparably

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on that Sovereign Being which subsists for ever, by such Actions as will Immortalize themselves. Let us leave to Providence the disposal of Time, and let us improve that she gives unto us; both Good and Evil come from her, let us receive them with the same Countenance.

Since of necessity we must dye, let us sweeten the Harshness of this necessity, by leading a Life more agreeable than Death is terrible. This is the way to be Happy and Contented. After having made my Observations upon the World, under different Circumstances, for the space of Fifty Years, I think my self happy in having so far attain'd to its Knowledge, as to make it known to others; because the Knowledge one has of it, and its Despicableness are inseparable. All its Pleasures are imaginary, but its Pains very sensible. All the Felicities it exposes to Sale, are only such in their Names, whereas

whereas the Evils she produces, make a deep Impression on our very Bowels. Hope is the Pledge of that Repose, it promises us, tho' it is not able to give it; and Fear always attends what we enjoy, it being only Momentaneous. That Worldly Grandeur, we so much affect, bears only a false Lustre, having nothing in it that is real, but in outward appearance. These Truths, which are as obvious to our Minds as Day-light is to our Eyes, ought to serve us as a Light to make us find our Tranquillity, in laying hold of Time, as it comes to our Hands, in following the Path Reason shews to us, in having and fearing nothing but himself; because the Love and Fear of him makes our Earthly Paradise. Do but consider, that the whole World is but a Chimera, nothing being real there but Death.

Here Sin causes all the Misfortunes, and the want of Confidence

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in Providence, all the Miseries; here we never taste Pleasures but in imagination, but are actually sensible of the Pain. Here every thing grows Old, whilst we are looking upon them, and the Harmony of Praises we give to one another, loses it self in the Air. The Rich have the worst Lot of all, because whilst they go in quest after an imaginary Paradise, in the possession of their Riches, they meet with in the End a real Hell, by the Ill use they have made of them. The Poor murmur without reason against their Destiny, which they complain makes them miserable; the affluence of Fortune is not the Standard of the Lords Dwelling-Place. Ten Years of Pain, or of Pleasure are the same things, when they are both pass'd, as to the Times. As good Actions are always attended with the satisfaction of a Reward, so the ill ones are never without Fear of Punishment. Be
not

not tired with Living well, nor Dying well; a good Life always carries its own Tranquillity along with it; and the very Remembrance of a good Action Charms our Mind. That Satisfaction which remains to us upon our Death Beds, of having led a good Life, affects us beyond all the Pleasures we have enjoy'd in our Life time. Every one applies his Thoughts on making his Fortune in this World, which is only Temporary, and very few make it their Business to render themselves happy in the next, where they are to Live for ever. Let Fortune change it's Face as it will, let us always look upon it with the same Countenance, that so we may be fix'd above it; 'tis more Glorious to despise than to possess Riches. The End of our Life is the End of the World, with respect to our selves; and the Day of Death, the Day of Judgment; and 'tis impossible our Mind should not think of Eternity, when it con-

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siders,

200 *The Happy Life: Or,*

siders, that we can neither avoid, nor fly from it, because that Time, which conducts us to the Grave, and Death, which is infallible to us, deliver us up to that Being which is unalterable. The World deceives all such as give Ear to her, and Fortune those that follow her steps. Voluptuousness always causes Unhappiness, and Ambition nothing but Miseries. And Death, the thoughts whereof prove an Hell on Earth to the Rich, is a Comfort to the Poor, whose Victorious Patience here below, prepares the way for their Triumphs above.

'Tis in vain to go in search after Tranquillity, unless we look for it in God, it's he alone that can give it us. So soon as you fix your Eyes on him, you will despise every thing you have seen before; from that very Minute. you begin to love him, you will forget every thing you loved before; and at the same time your
Desires.

Desires are directed towards him, you will renounce all the pretensions you ever had upon any thing else in this World. These are Truths that prove themselves, and convince at once both our Minds, and Senses; since Experience it self contradicts the Incredulous. I can't but detest the Malicious and voluntary Blindness of those, who will say it is not Day, whilst the Sun shines. There can be no greater Sin than obstinately and designedly to call in question a Truth which is clearer than the Sun himself, and which is convincing in it self. God has annexed so great a Satisfaction to a Mind that Loves and Fears him, that this Love and Fear make up the Earthly Paradise; and I am surprized, this should admit of the least doubt, because nothing is more easie than to make Tryal of it, and this Tryal at the same time fully convinces him that makes it.

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All the World is desirous of the Tranquillity of this Life, and no body will consider of the means to obtain it. As this Tranquillity consists in this, that we commit no Offences against God, he renders it so sensible to us, that of necessity our Heart must be engaged by the Satisfaction it finds it, if it resists not that Reason which ought to Instruct it. Dear Reader, if this Treatise comes to thy Hands, don't suffer it should at the Great Day reproach thee to thy Confusion, with having despised the Advice I give thee; to procure thy own Happiness both in this and the World to come, by a firm Resolution never to offend God; I say by a positive Resolution, for as 'tis that which begins the Work of this Innocence, and consequently of this Happiness; so God's Grace (thro' *Jesus Christ*) will accomplish and crown it with Eternal Felicity. But remember, that as our Soul can contain

tain nothing but God, we must fill it before-hand with the Love and Fear of him; that so loving him with all our Heart, our Heart desiring nothing besides him, and fearing nothing but him, our Mind is freed from all inquietudes.

Resolve therefore, with an unshaken Resolution, never to Offend God by any Wilsul Sin, and and not to refuse Alms to the Poor he sends thee. Thou wilt perhaps thinks it will impoverish thee; but since God himself receives those Charitable Gifts thou bestowest upon the Poor, he Engages himself, whilst he accepts of them, to restore them to thee again, and thou hast not the least Reason to doubt of it, because he has promised it. I will not set any measure nor price upon thy Charity and Alms, 'tis enough for thee to give according to thy ability, provided thy Heart is readier to do it, than thy Hand.

'Twas

204 *The Contented Man, &c.*

'Twas never heard of that a Man was grown poor, by having done so much by the needy; this Excess of Charity changes its Nature, it can't be excessive. Don't be so far taken up with Self-Love as to be solicitous upon this account. What will become of thy Children: you can't put your Money into better hands, than into God Almighty's; for instead of becoming a Bankrupt, he pays us the Interest before-hand, and that with so much profuseness, that it amounts to more than the Principal Debt.

R E.

REFLECTIONS
UPON
Divers Subjects
OF
MORALITY.

CHAP. I.

Of the Nature of Man.

MAN is composed of Soul and Body, join'd together by an unknown and incomprehensible Knot. The Soul is of an intelligent Nature, capable of Good and Evil, of Happiness and

and Misery. The Body is an Engine, consisting of an infinite Number of Organs and Conduits, proper to produce an infinite Diversity of Actions and Motions. This Engine, I say, has such vast variety of Parts, of Vessels and Muscles, that the smallest thing in the World may put it out of Order, and hinder its Motion. Those that are acquainted with its Structure, are so far from wondring that Men dye so soon, that they are rather surpris'd, how they can live so long as they generally do. How stupendious soever this Machine of Man's Body may be in it self, the Consideration of its Weakness, of the many Infirmities it is subject to, and its short Duration, (because Death is to destroy that glorious Disposition, and most admirable Composure of its Parts) ought to disentangle his Soul from that slender Portion of Matter, unto which it is join'd for a small time, and to prevent her making her self

a Slave to that Body, she ought to govern, and which ought to submit it self to her Obedience.

God has join'd the Spirit of Man to a certain Portion of that Matter, whereof all the corporeal Substances of the Universe are composed ; and 'tis this that makes him have a great Influence upon that Portion of Matter, wherewith he is united, because 'tis he that animates it, and gives it Motion and Life. This Spirit should be united unto God, in a much stricter manner, being created after God's Image, who is the Principle and End of his Being, and who has made him, to be known and beloved by him. But this Union of the Spirit with God being impaired by Sin, has strengthned that Tye there is between him and the Body. The Miseries unto which Man's Body was reduced, has engaged the Soul to enter into a stricter Union with it ; the weight of Concupiscence draws her so strongly towards Corporeal

poreal Subjects, that she is not in a Condition to raise her self towards God, unless assisted by the Grace and Merits of our Saviour.

'Tis this that produces all the Errors of the Spirit, and all the Corruption of the Heart; the Spirit not judging of things any farther than as they have a relation to our Senses, makes his Choice according to the Inclinations of our Passions and Senses: he unfortunately stops himself by the way, so that he either knows not God, or if he has known him, instead of turning himself to him, as to the Principle and End of his Being, he miserably loses himself in his own Thoughts, according to the Words of the A-

Rom. c. i.
v. 21.

postle; *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not, as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned.*

How

How many such are there in the World, who live like Brutes, without making due Reflection upon the Nature and Dignity of the Soul, upon her Union with our Bodies, and the short Stay she has to make there? How many are there, who not in the least consider who is the Author of her, from whence she comes, and whither she is to go? Those that apply their Care to their Bodies, which they Idolize, make their Souls subject to the vilest part of themselves, and to their gross and brutish Pleasures; thus passing away their Lives, as if their Souls were for ever to be united to that Portion of Matter which surrounds it, so as never to be separated from it. What use do they make of their Souls, of their Spirits, and of all their Senses, during that short time they have to live, which is no more than a point compared to Eternity, living always in Slavery to their Bodies, and every thing that belongs to it,
they

they blindly follow all its Motions.

Man being in honour, says
 Pl. 49. v. King David, *is like the*
 12. *Beasts that perish.*

The greatest Honour of Mankind, and which infinitely raises him above the Beasts, and all other even the most perfect Creatures, is, his being created after God's Image it self, and endued by his Creator with a Power of knowing and loving him; but notwithstanding all, this Man did not know nor was sensible of the high Value of this Honour, and instead of endeavouring to become like unto his Creator, he has made himself like unto the Brutes, who act without either Knowledge or Reason.

Since the Word is made Flesh, and has dwelt among us, if we have neglected in some measure the Honour of our Creation, let us at least remember its Value by our Redemption. Let us not follow those impious Reprobates, who
 aim

aim at nothing but Scandal, such as will occasion their Fall. This aim of theirs, is the Affection they bear to every thing that may prove their Destruction, *This their way is their Folly*, this is a Pl. 49. v. 13. kind of Madness, which has possess'd them with an insatiable Desire of Riches and Glory; these, says *St. Chrysostome*, are most terrible Objects of Scandal, and the fatal Obstacles of their Salvation. But what is more deplorable, is, that, according to the Prophet, those that have taken to this scandalous Way, look upon themselves as happy in the midst of their greatest Unhappiness, and thinking themselves wise in the highest Excess of their fatal Folly, dare to extol that which makes others shed Tears. For, if it is a difficult Task to avoid falling into Sins, even when we condemn them, into what an Abyss of Misery won't those precipitate themselves into, who glory in and applaud them? *Every Man*, according

Psal. 39.
v. 36

ing to the Royal Prophet,
walketh in a vain shew, that
is as much as to say,
consider Mankind from which side
you will, either in his Nobility,
or in his Beauty, either in his
great Possessions, or even in his
Wit or Wisdom, 'tis all Vanity,
unless he Regulate them accord-
ing to the Spirit and Wisdom of
God. The same Prophet admiring
God's Grandeur in the Hea-
vens, takes occasion thence of ad-
miration, how so potent and so
exalted a Spirit, should condescend
so far, as to create so many things
for the sake of Mankind.

Pf. 8. v. 5.
6.

*Thou hast, says he, made him
little lower than the Angels,
hast Crown'd him with Glory and
Honour, thou madest him to have
Dominion over the Works of thy
Hands.* Let us therefore admire,
with this Holy King, the Hea-
vens, Moon, and Stars, and so vast
a number of other things, which
are the magnificent Products of
God's

God's Power. But let us admire infinitely more, that Effect of his peculiar and infinite Mercy, according to which he has not only been pleased to remember Mankind in *Adam*, whom he created so holy and so great, but also in the Son of Man, in our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who, in so divine, and, at the same time, so merciful a manner, would condescend so low, as to appear in our Flesh.

C H A P. II.

Of the Life of Man.

THE Life of Man has its Dependence on an Engine, so nicely contrived, and consisting of so many parts, that it is almost surprising how it should subsist, even for a small time, the least Disorder being sufficient to destroy its Oeconomy; and since the Fall of *Adam*, it has been only an interrupted Race

Race to Death. *When a few Years are gone, then shall I go the*

C. 16. v. 22.

C. 14. v. 5.

way, whence I shall not return, says Job; and in

another Place: Seeing the Days (of Man) are determined, the number of his Months are with thee, thou hast appointed his Bounds, and them he cannot pass.

'Tis certain, our Soul is united to the Body, but for a small time, the Stay she is to make in the Body, is of a very short Continuance; being only a Passage to the Journey of Eternity. We draw every Moment nearer and nearer to Death, and can't recover the time that is lost; we walk along the Tract of irrecoverable Time of this Life, and of this even we have only a small Share in our Disposal, because Nature of necessity robs us of a great part of it. *Thou hast made*

my Days as an hands breadth, says the Royal Prophet on this Subject,

Ps. 39. v. 5, 6.

and mine Age is as nothing before thee, certainly every Man at his best State is alto-

gether

gether Vanity. Surely every Man walketh in a vain Shew, they are disquieted in vain. He cometh forth like a Flower, says C. 14. V. 16. Job, and is cut down; he fleeth also like a Shadow, and continueth not. According to the Words of K. David, Man's Days are as Grass, as the Flower of the Field, so Pf. 103. v. 15, 16. he flourisheth; but the Wind passeth over it, and so it is gone, and the Place thereof shall know it no more. C. 40. V. 6, 7. Isaiah said, All Flesh is Grass, and all the Goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field: the Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth, &c. Man is brought forth on a sudden out of Obscurity, to make his Appearance here like a Flower, that is just opening, and some few Moments after disappears again, Death makes him return to his former Obscurity; he is like a Flower which stood fair by its Lustre, Verdure and Beauty yesterday, but to morrow it is dried up, and to be seen no more.

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To make us sensible of the shortness of our Life, let us but consider every Man's Life with respect to Eternity, to see what a slender Share it has; for, as every one of us, has but a slender part of Matter, and holds but a small Corner of the Earth, in this vast Extent of the Universe, so every one has but a very slender Continuance of time, in reference to so many Ages, and even this is limited. it takes away all Mankind, it passes and never returns. The Life of Man, though never so long, and never so pleasing, considered with respect to the time past and to come, will after all, appear to be very short; and according to this Comparison, there will be scarce any Difference betwixt a long and happy, and a short and unhappy Life, All passes away in an instant, Pleasures, Favours of Fortune, Disgraces, Prosperities, Adversities, &c. What is become of all Men that lived under those Circumstances? What is
be-

become of them, of their Cares, Occupations, their Pleasures, their Troubles, their Power? Every Man must die, and there is no great Distance of time, betwixt him that dies first, and he that dies after him. Both what pleases us, and what disturbs us, is only of a short Continuance, Death puts an End in a Moment to our Cares and Troubles. Eternity, which makes every thing alike, will put no Difference betwixt such as have lived either a long or a short Time, betwixt great and little, betwixt the fortunate and unfortunate. Why are we then so much addicted to Pride? Why so eager after Pleasures, why so fond of the things of this World? Why do we deceive our selves with the Hopes of a long Life, since the longest Life is no more than a Minute, if compared to Eternity? To have seen much or little of the World, is the same thing, when Death puts every thing into a State of Equality.

The View of this World is always the same, there being nothing that is new to be seen in it, and consequently Life and Death ought to be indifferent to us, as also whether we die in the Bloom of our Youth, or in a decrepid Age. There is but one thing worthy our Care and Desires, that is, to seek for God wherever we go, and to submit to his Commandments. Every thing must bear its Respect to God, since first or last we must all fall into his Hands ; we ought therefore to have no more than one Desire, which is to please and obey him.

C H A P. III.

Of Death.

MANKIND are by God's Justice condemn'd to Death ; this Sentence is every Day executed upon vast Numbers, at such an hour, and in such a manner,

ner as God has determin'd. As God has set down the Minute of every Mans is Birth, so he has done also with the time of their Death, and 'tis a mistake to look for the Cause of it in Diseases, or some other Accidents;

for it is appointed unto all Heb. c. 9.

Men once to dye. I know, v. 27.

says Job, thou wilt bring me C. 30. v. 23

to Death, and to the House appointed

for all Living. What Man

is he, says the Royal Pf. 89. v.

Prophet, that Liveth and 48.

shall not see Death? For tho' Elias

was taken up into Heaven his

Death was only delay'd, according

to St. Gregory's Opinion, but he

did not avoid it, as is Evident

from the Words of the

Gospel: Elias shall truly Mat. c. 17.

first come, and restore all v. 11.

things. He is to restore every

thing, because he is to be resto-

red to the World to accomplish

L 3 the

Greg. lib.
20 Moral.

the Ministry of Preaching, and to pay that Debt of the Flesh he owes to Death. Death is infallible, but yet uncertain in all its Circumstances, in respect to the Day, Place, and Manner thereof. It draws, tho' insensibly, nearer and nearer every Day, and never stops by the way; every step a Man makes in his Life, brings him so much the nearer to Death. *Job* says, that his Days are pass'd away swifter than the Thread that is cut by the Weavers Hand. When they weave Cloth, they stand still at certain times, but in our Life, Time goes on incessantly. When the Weaver rests his Hands, the Work goes not forward, but in this Life, as time never stands still, so we draw nearer to our End, even when we rest our selves, and even when we are asleep, we come to our Journeys End. The longer our Life lasts, the more it draws towards that Point

Point, when the Thread is to be cut off; for in Proportion as the present Time passes, that which is to come grows shorter, and during the whole Course of our Life, the Future time is so much the shorter, as that which is come has been the longer.

Death being not only infallible, but also uncertain, it surprizes us. It surprizes good Men, who, after their long, Meditations upon Death, are not always so well prepar'd, but that they have some Inclinations left for Life. It surprizes Ill Men; *These*, says Job, *spend their Days in Wealth,* C. 21. v. 13. *and in a Moment go down to the Grave*, because, that even the Continuance of the longest Life is transitory, and seems no more than a Point, after it is pass'd. For, at the Point of Death, we have nothing left of all we had before, and we have nothing of what is to come, because we have but a few Minutes to live. This we must own, that a Life enclosed
L 4 into

into such strait Bounds, is actually no more than a Point.

'Tis not alone that Death surprize us, but it is also irreparable; all the faults we have committed here, are past Amendment; There is but one Life, and but one Death, if we dye not well, 'tis so to all Eternity. When

a few Years are come, says
 C. 16. v. Job, *then I shall go the way,*
 22. *whence I shall never return.*

Every thing, when it is over, is short, let it be never so long, and we shall never come back, the same Way we walk in; not but that one day we shall return to this Flesh at the Resurrection, but we shall never return to this troublesome Mortal Life, and undergo the same Pain we suffer in this World, to obtain Eternity for our Reward. Since then Death is as well infallible as uncertain, since it surprizes us and is irreparable we must live like Men, who infallibly expect Death, and therefore

fore must employ every Moment of our Life, in preparing our selves for Death. To dye, is to accomplish the Time that is given us, and which is never to be given a second time. This is an Action that is to be the last of our Life; and yet it ought to be done before, the Time of Death comes; for should we be surprized by Death, we should certainly wish for some more time, that we might lead a better Life, than we have done. Let us therefore look upon every day, as the last of our Life; and upon every Action, as if it were to be the last, this is the securest Way never to be surprized at Death. We ought always to have Death present in our Thoughts, and to be vigilant in every Step of our Life, that so we may not be surprized, but dye in such a manner, that at the Point of Death, we may have no Reason to wish, to live our Life over again.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Effects of Death.

THE first Effect of Death is, to deprive us of what we were possess'd of here, I mean of those things that make the different Conditions of Men in the World; for Death brings all to a State of Equality, no Man so Poor, but after he is Dead, he wants not a Place where to rot in; and the greatest Princes will have no more, of all their Riches and Grandeur, this being the only thing that is left them. *My Breath is corrupt, my Days*
C. 17. v. 1. *are extinct, the Graves are ready for me, says Job.*

The second Effect of Death is, our Separation from our Dearest Friends: This very Thought drew Tears from *Ezechias's* Eyes; for, instead of our Relations, who used

to

to Cherish us, instead of our Friends that use to keep us Company, and instead of our Servants that us'd to attend and respect us, we shall have no other Companions but the Worms, according to the Words of *Job*: *I have said to Corruption,* C. 17. v. 14. *thou art my Father, and to the Worms thou art my Mother and my Sister*; which is as much as to say, I know that Mankind is the Off-spring of Corruption, we owe our Origine to it, and we bring it along with us into the World; this is visible in our Bodies; for our flesh, does it not come from Corruption, and don't we bring it along with us into the World.

The third Effect of Death is, the Ruin of all our Projects. The Rich Man in the Gospel, had so plentiful a Harvest, that he was at a stand where to preserve it, his Storehouses were not large enough; he fram'd vast Designs of building, he spent his time in Jollity

lity and Pleasures, but God told him at the same time:

Luk. c. 17.
v. 20.

Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul will be required of thee, then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided? My Days are past, says Job, my Purposes are broken off, even the Thoughts of my Heart.

The Fourth Effect of Death, is the Corruption of the Body; that same Body we pamper up with so many delicious things, for the preserving and nourishing thereof, we take so much Care and Pains for the Preservation whereof, we even sacrifice our Pleasures; for the Ease of which, we consecrate one half of our Life in Sleep and Idleness, that same Body shall be a Prey to the Worms. What is like to become of those who shew so much Passion for their Bodies? Ask *Job*, he says, they shall sleep in Dust, and be covered by the Worms.

The

The Fifth Effect of Death is, that we shall be forgotten. After all the Pains you have taken for the Glory and Settlement of your Family, what Thanks do you think Posterity will give you? We walk towards the latter end of the Day, our Body casts a larger Shadow upon the Ground, but who can see the remnants of it the next Day? We walk in a fair Meadow which is covered with delicious Flowers in the Spring, but what becomes of them at the approach of Winter? We when going over a Churchyard tread upon the Ashes of Thousands of dead Bodies, and do we as much as remember the Names of a Thousand part of them? 'Tis the last Fate of Man, to be forgotten by Men.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

*Of what Nature those Things are, which
we are deprived of by Death.*

IF we will seriously consider, what it is we lose by Death ; and of what a Nature those things are, which it deprives us of, it ought not to appear so great an Evil to us. What is it our Loss by Death amounts to, either within, or without our selves? Without us we see nothing but Inconstancy, Impositions, Malice, Contradictions, Vengeance, Enmity, Wars. How many Temptations are not we subject to, from the inferior Objects, though they are vain, weak, and deceitful? Within us, we are tormented by the successive Motions of our Passions, which are always in Rebellion against our selves. Death deprives us of Life, but pray what is Life? a Vapour, a sort of perpetual Corruption, a Prison,

Prison, a Captivity, from which we are delivered by Death, a continual Succession of Pains and Miseries. If we make due and serious Reflections upon the Passages of this World, you will find there is nothing to be met with in it, but continual Pains, whether in the Preservation of this Mortal Body, continually exposed to a Thousand Dangers, or in respect of our Friends, for fear of disobliging them, or in reference to our Enemies, whose ill Designs against us we have frequent reason to suspect; or whether in regard of seeing our selves at a great Distance from our native Country; and after all, in that Blindness which deprives us of the true Light of our Soul, we are very well pleased to live here on Earth, under all these vile Circumstances.

Man that is born of a Woman, is of few Days, and C. 14. V. 1.
full of trouble. The holy Man Job, could not have more pathetically re-

represented to us in a few Words, the Pains Man is reduced to for the Punishment of his Sins. His Life is indeed short in its Continuance, but long for the Multiplicity of his Miseries. We do feed our Body with Meats, for fear it should decay for want of Nourishment: We cleanse it by Abstinence, for fear it should be overcharged by Repletion. We keep it in Vigour by Exercise, for fear it should languish for want of Action, and immediately after we put it to rest, lest it should fail under the Burthen, of its excessive Labour. What is it we intend by all these Remedies against all these different Inconveniences? Nothing else than to support our Corruptibility, that by the Multiplicity of our Care we bestow upon our Bodies, we may support the weight of its Mutability and Miseries. Every thing in this World is nothing but Pain and Affliction. This Subjection to the Corruption of the
Flesh,

Flesh, to provide it with what is necessary during this Life, is that not a most deplorable and miserable State? We are obliged to find Cloaths to defend our selves against the Cold; Provisions against Hunger, and Refreshment against the excessive Heats. What a Misery is it to lie under an Obligation, to preserve with so much Care our Health, which however, notwithstanding all our Precautions, is soon lost; to take so much Pains to recover it, after it is lost, and after all, to be in continual Danger of losing it every Moment, after it has been recovered? Add to all this, the Misery of a Man exiled from Heaven, who delights even in his Exilement, and is overwhelm'd with an infinite deal of Inquietudes and Troubles, though he dissembles the Weight thereof to himself; who is blinded in his Soul, and who is fond of living in Darkness all his Life time.

Who

Who are those we part with, when we die? Such they are, for the most part, as, being Slaves to their Passions, tyrannize over others, tho' they don't know themselves; who as soon as they are dead, will not be so much as remembred; and Posterity will not so much as be acquainted with their Names; should we be sorry to part with such a Generation, and take Pains to please them, and be praised by them? How many are there in the World, that are scarce supportable in their Morals, in their Manners: There is nothing but Inconstancy in worldly things, a great Name, Esteem, and Reputation, have nothing of Reality in them. All these things which appear to us with an uncommon Lustre, and most worthy of our Care and Esteem, are nothing but Vanities. What End do we propose in hunting after Glory, and Pleasures, and what Fruits shall we reap of all our Labour? What is
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become of those great Men, that have seen themselves raised to the highest Dignities? And what of those that were reduced to the greatest Extremity of Miseries? Both Sorts are no more. Let us call to our Mind the Magnificence of Royal Courts, which have been before our time, the Glory of the various Monarchies, their Laws, Wars, and Revolutions; the vast Multitude of Men that have lived before us, of those that live in our Age, and of those that are likely to succeed ours: Let us I say, remember their short Continuance, how soon they will be forgot by Posterity, as well as their Beauty, Lustre, and great Designs. All these Things are pass'd away like a Vapour; and we who make this Reflection, are not we subject to the same Fate with those that preceded us? Then there is no new Thing on Earth; every thing that has been, is so again, and will be so for the future. Hence we may
draw

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draw this Conclusion, that Death, which delivers us from so many Miseries, and who can't rob us but of such things as have nothing of Reality in them, is no very great Evil, and that therefore it is a Folly to rack and torment our selves on that account, because our Life is only momentaneous, and in an instant we shall cease to be any more.

C H A P. VI.

*Of the Usefulness of the Thoughts
on Death.*

Nothing is more powerful to contain Mankind within the Bounds of their Duty, to make them judge without Prejudice of every thing, to calm their Passions, and to draw them away from the Delights of this World, than the Consideration of Death, according to the Words of the Wise Man: *Remember thy End, that thou mayest*

mayest never sin. 'Tis certain, that if during this troublesome Life, we did daily consider that Death will soon put an End to our Cares, to our Inquietudes, and all the Evils we suffer, that Death will also take us off, in spite of our selves, from all our Labours, from our Love, from our Desires, and free us from our Troubles, we would lead a much more easie, less troublesome, and less turbulent Life. We would be less avaricious, less ambitious, and less concern'd about Misfortunes, Losses and Injuries, and less addicted to the Enjoyment of created Things. But so blind is Mankind, that they keep at a Distance, so far as in them lies, so wholesome a Thought, just as if they could annihilate that Eternity, that waits for them, by putting it out of their Thoughts. Eternity will subsist in spite of them, it draws nearer to them, and Death, which opens the Gate to it, will soon put them under an infallible and dreadful
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Necessity of seeing themselves either eternally happy, or miserable.

Since they can't avoid Death, they think to make themselves happy, by not thinking of it; but 'tis to no purpose, to divert our Thoughts another way, every thing tells us we must die; Hunger, Thirst, Distempers, a continual Decay of our Bodies, and an infinite number of Accidents, which threaten us daily, are like so many Summons, to forewarn us to think of Death. Those of our Friends, that die much about the same Age we are of, tell us we must expect the same before long. Nay, every Alteration we find, ought to advertise us thereof, for Life passes away in continual Changes, till Death puts the final Period to it; we must feel the same Alterations they have seen, and do see in others, and as they ought to improve theirs to their own Benefit, so those they leave

leave behind them, ought to benefit by theirs.

The Thoughts of Death are very proper to make a Man take a Distaste at this World, to check his Pride, and to inspire him with a happy Fear of God's Judgment; because the Death of the Body, though terrible in it self, is nothing but an Emblem of the Death of the Soul. 'Tis a most surprising Blindness in Mankind, to see his Life pass away continually, without thinking of its last End, without Consideration, without Inquietudes, without Foresight, and without Fear; blindly following all his Inclinations, without reflecting what is like to follow, and labouring with all his Might to do that, which must render him unhappy to all Eternity. Who can be secure of his Life for one Day, how can a Man tell but this present is his last? Death, who threatens us every Minute, will transfer us suddenly into an Eternal State, either
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of Happiness or Unhappiness. Nothing but this Life, the most frail and uncertain thing in the World, stands betwixt us and Heaven, and Hell; as nothing is more true, so nothing ought to be more terrible, and yet this is the very thing we think of last of all. O Death! how bitter art thou to those that wallow in Riches. But the very Thoughts of Death are so sweet to those that separate their Minds from all visible Things, and think of nothing but what is invisible; these may truly say with the Apostle:

Phil 3. v.
21, 22.

For our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue even all things to himself.

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Means to look Death in the Face with Comfort.

THE Pagan Philosophers were in error, concerning the Idea they had formed of Death. They look'd upon it as a thing Natural to Mankind, all their Arguments being founded upon that Basis or Principle. But the Christian Religion teaches us quite otherwise, and makes us sensible, that Death is the Punishment of Sin, and laid upon Mankind for the Expiation of Sin; necessary to Mankind, to free him from those Concupiscencies, without which, even the Saints
S: Aug.
Serm. 34.
 don't live in this World; Death is an Execution of a Sentence, founded upon God's Justice, pursuant to which all Men are condemned to die. Death and Life therefore cught to be indifferent
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to us, because we ought not to extend our Wishes beyond what he would have us, and live in an absolute Conformity to his Will; so that whenever Death comes to separate us from all Earthly things, we ought to receive him with an entire Submission to his Commands; nay even with Joy; we easily part with this Life, if we are willing to part with Vice, and reflect upon all the Miseries that make it both nauseous and troublesome.

The greatest Inducement which ought to persuade us to look Death in the Face, is in *Jesus Christ*, and his Merits. If we reflect upon every thing in *Jesus Christ*, 'tis there we shall meet with all the Comfort we can wish for. Death consider'd in *Jesus Christ*, is holy and sweet; without *Jesus Christ*, it is dreadful in its own Nature. *Jesus Christ* did not suffer Death, but to sanctifie our Death and Sufferings. We don't lose for ever the *Faithful* when they

they die, 'tis at that moment God's Will is accomplish'd in them, and their Will is altogether involv'd in God's Will. 'Tis at that instant they are entirely freed from Sin, and made sensible of God's Promise, that their Sacrifice is acceptable, and that they have finish'd the Task God had set them. This is a peculiar Privilege belonging to Christians only, not to be afflicted at the Death of the Faithful, like the Pagans, who live without Hopes. Death, in respect of the Effect it produces, is desirable; it delivers us from Concupiscency, it frees us from the Opportunities of sinning, it puts a Period to a Life corrupted by Sin, it takes away from the Body the Power of sinning, it separates the Soul from a Body subject to sin, it punishes the Body guilty of Sin, and lastly, it makes our Soul to abandon Earth, and a Life full of Corruption, in order to ascend to Heaven, to be reunited to God.

C H A P. VIII.

*Of Time, and how to make good use
of it.*

THE greatest part of Mankind, employ the little time they have to live, so ill, that their whole Contrivance tends to nothing else, than how to lose it. All their Care is, to forget themselves, to amuse their Hearts with outward Appearances of things, and thus to let slip away their short but precious Time, without thinking. This is the true Source of all our irregular Occupations, or what we call Diversions; contrived on purpose to pass away Time, without being sensible of it, or rather without being sensible of our own Condition. The time of Life is short and uncertain, and of that short and uncertain Time, no part is our own, but the present, which is only a Moment; and yet we seldom
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dom keep to the present, but always let our Thoughts run upon what is not sure, without considering of that small part which only belongs to us : We think of what is not, and let slip without thinking, that which only subsists at present. We contrive continually how to dispose of things that are not in our Power ; and for a Time, which it is not in our Power to secure our selves : Our Thoughts are always employ'd upon what is either pass'd, or what is to come, and we neglect what is present to dispose of. Futurities, just as if they were in our Disposal ; this is the Source of many Disorders. The Time past, and Time to come, being not in our Power, we have nothing but the present that is in our disposal ; and to make the best use of it, we must every Moment be employed in executing God's Commands, and in submitting to all the Laws of that Providence, which governs every thing ; God will ask

no more of us. We must apply our selves to act according to our Duty at present, and to check our superfluous Cares for what is to come. The whole Duty of Man is comprehended in these three things: To do what God would have us to do, to act as he would have us, and that at such a time as God has ordained us. A Man ought to look with an indifferent Eye, upon all the Events of Life, because they are all owing to God's Will; he ought never to be idle, but at all times to be employ'd in doing well; neither is it his Business to make his own Choice: Disgraces and Misfortunes ought to be indifferent to him; nay, Death it self, unto which he is condemn'd by God's Order; he ought always to be active, let his Circumstances be how they will, and this Action is nothing else, than entire Submission to God's Will, by accepting with a free Heart every thing that befalls

befals him, not even excepting Death it self.

A Man must be very blind, and can't be free from Guilt, who leads an idle Life; being born for Action, and to serve that Society, whereof he is a Member. Reason ought to engage him to what Passions make him do, as we see in the Miser, in the Ambitious, and in the Artist, who think of nothing but their Business, and how to accomplish their several Designs. Every Man was not made for one and the same thing, every one has his peculiar Talent, and this Talent being God's Gift, every Man ought to make good use of it. Each Man in his Station and Profession, should make it his Study to know the Obligations and Duty he lies under, in order to discharge them to the best of his Power: No Benefit is to be expected, if we follow the motions of our Passions; on the contrary, we ought rather to be apprehensive of the ill Consequence thereof. To

sleep, to drink, and to eat, are animal Functions, which being necessary, must be used with Moderation; but we must not suffer these Functions to make us forgetful of our Duty, or to prevent us from knowing and accomplishing it. When we are tempted to an ill Action, we ought to consider, that we ought not to do, nor to think any thing, but what might be known, and which we need not be ashamed to discover our selves; this will engage us both to act and to think of nothing but what is good. Our Thoughts run often upon such Matters as would make us blush, should we discover them; and supposing we don't discover them, can they escape God's Knowledge? does not he see the very bottom of our Heart? is not he witness to our Actions? these Considerations will keep us within the Limits of our Duty. Before we do any thing, or before we propose the Enjoyment of any Pleasure, we must

must examine the Consequences thereof, and how far it will affect our Soul; whether it is not likely to be attended with Repentance and Pain, and how we used to find our selves distressed after such like Actions. There is no Pleasure without its Bitterness, and therefore soon loses its Relish; those who have had their full glut of them, are convinced that true Felicity is not to be found either in Pleasure, Riches, or Dignities; but only in the Practice of Virtue.

The greatest part of Mankind live on, without knowing what they are, where they are, and what they are to be. Inebriated by their Passions, they insensibly pass away their time, in continual Torments, Inquietudes and Uncertainties, without any Resolution to consider of their End. Their Life passes away in Irregularities, and unprofitable Works, and in vain Resolutions in regard to Futurities, which are beyond their Power. We may

perhaps be in the same, if not in a worse Condition, at the time we purpose to do a good Action, we may meet with the same Obstacles, as at present, and may have the same Difficulties to surmount. Let us therefore take the present time for a good Action, because it may perhaps be the last, the present being only in our Power. God requires no more from us.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Vanity and Inconstancy of Worldly Things.

THere are but few who come to the Knowledge of Truth, because there are but few that will re-enter within themselves, and apply themselves to due Reflections and Meditations. Always without themselves seduc'd by Exterior Objects, wherewith their Senses enchant them; they judge of every thing,

thing, not as they really are, but as they are represented to them by their prejudiced Passions, who keep them in Bondage. If we did take things as really they are, and not as they appear to our deceitful Senses, we should certainly avoid falling into such gross Errors, and such high Inquietudes and Troubles, as we see we do, but we will make them what they are not; and that which above all discovers our Blindness, our Corruptions, and erroneous Sentiments, is, that Experience itself is not sufficient to convince us of the contrary, even with respect to those Pleasures we have tasted so often; which, tho' they have left behind them nothing but Pain and Trouble, yet we desire them with the same Ardour as before, just as if by our own Experience we were not acquainted with the ill Consequences of them. This is an infallible Sign, either of great want of Consideration, or of a stronger Corruption of our Heart
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which thus blinds us, in respect to our own Felicity.

To convince our selves of the Inconstancy and Vanity of all things, we need only to call to remembrance what surprizing Alterations we have seen. All worldly Things move in the same Orb; one Age follows the other, and Time runs on with a most prodigious Rapidity: He that is alive to Day, may be converted into Earth to Morrow; and this Earth soon after into some other thing. Reflect upon the true Nature of Employments, Dignities, Honours, and Riches; upon the Perfection of our Minds and Bodies; and to be short, upon every thing that is in our Possession, what is become of those that were Masters of them; and of those that underwent so many Troubles in the Hopes, and in the Possession of them. All these things are the Dependencies of this miserable Life, which in itself depends on nothing, which is always exposed

sed to a thousand Chances, which draws every Moment nearer to its end, and which will be soon at an end, let us take what care we can to preserve it. All the Objects therefore which engage Men to Voluptuousness, or which check them out of Fear of Pain, are of short Continuance, as well as those which adorn them with Reputation and Glory; having no other Foundation, but our Life, which is subject to sudden Destruction.

Every thing that can befall a Man in particular, is enclosed within that short space of time we have to live; so that, since both Pains and Pleasures are reduced into such narrow Bounds, they ought not to make so deep an Impression upon our Minds, which is owing to our irregular Imaginations and corrupt Opinions. We judge of things quite otherwise than in reality they are; we attribute to Pleasures a quite different Nature from what they have, by
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the false Ideas we frame to our selves concerning them; and we dread beforehand future Evils, as if we were assured they must of necessity befall us; we lay such Vices as are within our selves upon other things; we look upon those as Impossibilities, which we will not encompass out of Idleness; we condemn what we don't comprehend, either for want of Attention, or for want of Understanding and Judgment. If we reflect duely how soon every thing passes away, and is buried in Oblivion, their Vanity, and their Inconstancy, we may easily wean our selves from them; we shall suffer our Disgraces with Patience, and we shall not be so apt to be surprized by every thing that flatters our Senses, which are soon surprized by our false Judgment, and our Prejudices.

C H A P. X.

*That of Necessity, we must dispense
with the Wicked.*

WE cannot be easily surprized at whatever Ills we see committed, and at the Follies we hear of, if we consider, that it is impossible the World should be without ill, foolish and impertinent Men? We are convinced by our own Experience, that the World is full of Fools and Knaves; and an ill Man can do no otherwise than ill; a Fool can't but talk foolishly, and 'tis impossible an imprudent Man should act wisely, or that a Knave should deal sincerely; they act according to their Character, and why should we then find fault, and not be willing to suffer them? God might easily destroy ill Men if he would, and yet you see he suffers them, he gives them Nourishment and Light,
nay,

say, he suffers us also, who are of the Number of the Wicked, to teach us to suffer them, because 'tis a hard matter to bring them to Reason. It behoves us, upon such like Occasions, to apply our selves to the Practice of those Virtues that are opposite to the Vices we complain of; there being no Vice but what has its opposite Virtue; and Meekness would become useless, were it not for Cholerick Men, &c. All the Virtues are prescribed to us, to be put in practice, in opposition to the Wicked; God, who is more offended at them than we, and in whose Power it is to destroy them, bestows long Life, Health and Riches upon them: We must therefore suffer, excuse or correct them; because each Sinner is blind in his Passions, and the Ill he does is, because he doth not know the Truth. We should not be so sensible of other Mens Faults, did we but reflect upon our own: We frequently fall into the
same

same Error we condemn in others, and if we happen be free from the same Faults, we often have greater. If we are without Pride, we are perhaps Avaricious, Cholerick and Voluptuous. If any one does any thing against us, let us consider, whether we never did the like to some body or other; this is the way to banish our Complaints, Anger, Slanders and Revenge. Let us lay our Obligations upon others freely, and without hopes of Reward, and so we shall have no occasion to complain of Ingratitude: Let us be cautious how we confide our Secrets to others, and then we need not blame the Presidiousness of those that reveal'd them. Every Accident and Contrariety of Fortune that befalls us, ought to serve to exercise our Reason and our Virtue. Whatever the World says or does, a good Man ought always to appear as such; he ought not to alter his Course, but to act like what he is, or at least,

least, like what he ought to be, without any regard to the ill Conduct and Calumnies of the Wicked. Those that offend us, do more harm to themselves, than to us; for the more Ill they commit, the more they increase in Wickedness. They may make a Noise in the World, but 'tis not in their Power to alter us, or make us either good or bad: If they speak injuriously of us, let them talk on, whilst we continue to do our Duty. To propose, that a wicked Man should act otherwise than he does, is almost pretending to an Impossibility: There are certain Fruits which prove always bitter, and certain Ground, that will produce nothing but Thorns and Thistles.

C H A P. XV.

Of the great Work of our Salvation.

WE live in this World for no other End, than to work out our Salvation; to pay to God our Homage, Worship, and Adoration. *Jesus Christ* in the Gospel compares us to Trees, and wills us to produce good Fruits, in these Words: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* Good Works are the Fruits we must produce; *Jesus Christ* commands the useless Servant to be cast into Darkness, which ought to oblige us to work out our Salvation with Trembling and Fear; because, according to *St. Peter*, the righteous shall scarcely be saved; what is a man profited, says our Saviour, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul; and yet this most Christians do, who every day venture the Loss of their

Matth. c.
7. v. 19.

c. 4. v. 18.

their Souls, for the hopes of Transitory Pleasures; *wide is the gate*, says our Saviour, *and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.* Strait is the gate, adds our Saviour, *and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Jesus Christ in the Gospel, compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a Treasure, and to a Kingdom; he requires from us, to quit all, to conquer and take Possession of it. But such is the Blindness of Man, that he shews more Fondness for Misery and earthly Pleasures, than the Felicities of Heaven; notwithstanding he is convinced by his own Experience, that all Earthy Happiness is full of Bitterness, Vanity and Imperfections.

Among all the things belonging to us on Earth, the Thoughts of our Salvation take up the least part of our time, whilst we bestow the rest in Trifles, and upon things that are next to nothing, without scarce
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ever reflecting upon Eternity. We believe a Day of the last Judgment, and that God's Justice will punish the Wicked, and yet we scarce ever think of it; we know that the Righteous shall scarcely be saved, and yet we live as if we were secure of our Salvation. We are not ignorant, that the Kingdom of Heaven will not be given but to those who offer Violence to themselves, and yet we follow our Inclinations only in every thing we do; we know that the Martyrs and other holy Men did obtain Glory by their Sufferings, and yet nobody will be at the pains to imitate them. We are always busied in some thing or other, our Salvation is the only thing we don't think worth our Care. Thus we pass away our Lives, without duly reflecting upon God's severe Judgments; his irresistible Wrath that will appear on that terrible Day; on the small number of the Elected, and the numberless Multitude of
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Reprobates. We lead also our Lives without Inquietude; we spend our days in enjoying the present Life, though never so short and uncertain, without troubling our selves about the Torments of Futurity.

But, let us never so far alienate our Minds from the Thoughts of Death and Eternity, let us never so much flatter our selves with the deceitful Hopes of a long Life; the very Hour of our Death being set down, 'tis impossible for us to prolong it for so much as one Moment; when all the Glory of this World, the Lustre whereof has so often puffed us up with Pride, will vanish like Smoak; 'tis at that Minute Man will be convinced, and perhaps too late, of his Blindness, and the Inconstancy of all Earthly things. The Heart of Man, since the Fall of our first Parents, is so much inclined towards Earthly things, that it seldom relishes what belongs to Heaven. Its Judgment
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is corrupted, because it follows the Maxims of the Flesh, 'tis that which seduces it from the right Path, and makes it insensible to any thing but what is material, and affects the Senses. It is not affected by Spiritual Things, because the sensual Man comprehends not what belongs to God. Thus its strong Inclination towards Earthly Matter, is the reason why it comprehends not the Nature of its true Felicity; for when the Heart is once become all Terrestrial, how can the Mind be otherwise than misguided by the false Appearance of Things: Thus it is eager after a supposed Happiness, and in the mean while loses the real one. It becomes so fond of its Errors, that it will not be undeceived, for fear it should see its Pleasures diminish'd, and the supposititious Enjoyments of this Life impaired; and not to give the least Disturbance to that imaginary Tranquillity he thinks he enjoys in this Life, he puts

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puts the terrible Objects of Death at a great Distance from him, as well as those of Eternity, and what an Account then is he likely to give of his Conduct here on Earth? because these Thoughts would not only surprize, but also startle him.

Maxims and Rules for a Christian Life.

SEEL after the Kingdom of Heaven and its Righteousness, and all the rest shall be given unto you.

If you love me, says Jesus Christ, you will also love my Commandments; he that loves me, is he that loves and keeps my Commandments.

He that keeps God's Commandments, remains in him.

To keep God's Commandments, and to conform to the Ordinances of the Church, is the whole Life of a Christian. The whole Law and the Prophets, and all the Command-

mandments, are comprehended in these two : To love God and ones Neighbour.

The Love of God, is the Source of every thing that is Good; and Self-love, the Origin of all Evil.

Religion consists in Charity. 'Tis this that destroys in us the Desires of the Felicities, and the Fear of the Misfortunes of this World.

We don't improve in Religion, but only in Perfection, as our Charity and Love increases in us to God and our Neighbour; love all your Friends in God, and your Enemies for God's sake.

Let our Love for Men be never so great, our Love for Truth must exceed it; because we ought not to love them, but to obey that Truth which has commanded us so to do.

Let our Love for our Friends be never so excessive, we must never love their Faults. We ought to check them with Meekness, with Prudence, and with Charity, when occasion presents.

Entertain a true Charity for him that tells you of your Faults; and after that, tell him of his own as home as you think fit.

There is nothing in the World that more shews a Man to be enlightned with the Spirit of God, than his Charity, in endeavouring to correct Sin in others.

If you intend to correct your Neighbour, you must begin to correct your self first, because nothing is nearer nor more present unto us, than our selves.

We must consider of our own Salvation, before we think of that of others; we can't communicate that Peace we are not Masters of our selves; and 'tis very difficult, to purifie another Man's Heart, whilst ours is sullied with Sin.

All the Knowledge and Happiness of a Christian, consists in loving God with all his Heart, and to check and keep back every thing that opposes the Establishment of this Love in his Soul.

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Knowledge, without Piety and Humility, fills our Hearts with Pride, and serves only to render a Man more wicked and haughty.

Knowledge commonly entices us to lord it over our Neighbours, and to have a high Opinion of our selves; a fatal Error indeed, because we are nothing, and we cannot actually be any thing, unless we are humble, and have a modest Opinion of our selves.

The chief Knowledge of a Christian, is, to meditate upon the Knowledge of the crucify'd *Jesus Christ*; and to learn, after his Example, to live and die in Humility and Repentance.

He that knows how to despise the World, knows every thing; and without that Knowledge he knows nothing.

We must clear our Heart of all its Affection to the World, if we intend to be freed from the Evils the World puts upon us.

We must abandon that voluntarily, which it is not in our Power to keep.

That which appears great and exalted among Men, is an Abomination before God.

'Tis an Unhappiness to deceive the World, when we cajole them into an Esteem of us, such a one as we don't deserve; but 'tis still a much greater Misfortune, to follow the Faults of others, and to have a good Opinion of our selves, because other People who can't see into our Hearts, have an esteem for us.

If any one loves the World, the Love of God is not in him.

He that would be beloved by the World, must be an Enemy to God.

The World is a mortal Poison, and the Cause of all manner of Evil.

Our Soul is never in Peace there; and the Satisfaction which Truth
in-

inspires into us, is best relish'd in our Solitude.

People addicted to the World, dread Solitude, because it would afford them leisure to sound the bottom of their Hearts, and to be undeceived in those worldly Maxims they delight in. The more pleasing their Conversation is, the less their Thoughts are inclined to God and Salvation.

Nothing is so apt to harden us in our disorderly Courses, as to see the same practised in others: Certain Actions which would appear abominable to us, in our Solitude, appear with a quite different Face to us, because we see them commonly done.

The Conversation with, and the Example of Persons addicted to the World, perswade us, that we ought to do, as they do, and thus draw us after them in spite of our selves. *Jesus Christ* we find in a Solitude, and he urges and commands us to follow him, and he gives us Power

and Strength to do it. There is no putting off God with a Share; he that gives him not all, gives him nothing. He that will find all, must lose all. We are unworthy of *Jesus Christ*, if we can keep any thing from him. We have every thing with him, and we can want nothing that is good for us; but we can't expect to have it, unless we quit, at least in our Hearts, all worldly things. We can't have God, but in proportion as we abandon his Creatures, nay, as we abandon our selves.

Faith without good Works, is dead in it self.

Every Tree that bears no good Fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the Fire.

He that believes in God, shall be the same Spirit with him.

He that knows the Will of his Master, and does it not, shall be severely chastised.

If

If you don't repent, you will all perish, says our Saviour.

Purifie what is within, and what is without will be clean.

The whole Christian Life consists in the Expiation of our past Sins by Repentance, and in the Mortification of our Passions, by keeping us from the like for the future. Repentance is a Remedy to the Guilty, and a Glory to the Innocent. We know *Jesus Christ* to be our Saviour, by the many Wounds, wherewith his Body was torn in several places, and by the Cross on which he dy'd; and he will have no Disciples, but such as carry the Marks of his Passion in their Bodies, and are willing to be crucify'd with him, and for his sake.

When we have misused those Pleasures, and other things which are forbidden us, we must be very cautious how we make use even of those that are not forbidden.

We have always the greatest Reason to stand in Fear of God's Justice, when he leaves us to our selves, and let us alone in our disorderly Courses, as if he did not see them.

The Lord sees all the ways of Man, and all his Steps.

Prepare for Death in all the Actions of your Life.

Watch and pray, because you know not what Day and Hour the Son of Man is to come, says our Saviour.

Remember the End of your Life, and you will scarce ever sin.

We ought not to fear Death, because it puts an End to our Sins; and we ought not to wish for Life, unless to have longer Time for Repentance.

The Fear of Death, is too often the Consequence of a bad Life.

To remove the Bitterness of Death, we must die every Day to the World, and to our selves; and then

then Death will be to us the beginning of Eternal Life.

Let us live in this World like Travellers, and consider this World no otherwise, than as a Passage which is to lead us to Eternity: Thus Death will seem to us like a desirable Port, where we shall see an End of all our Miseries.

Let us accustom our selves, to think every Moment that is present to be the last of our Life; and let us put our selves in the same Station we would be in accordingly: By this continual Practice we shall die insensibly to the World, and to our selves, we shall live in *Jesus Christ*, and Death will be to us an Object of Joy, and not of Fear.

The End of him, who fears God, will be happy.

He that fears God, will be always free from Fear, because he puts all his Hopes in him alone.

We have but one thing alone to fear, that is, lest we should fear any thing besides himself.

Fast and pray, that ye fall not into Temptation, says our Saviour.

Vigilancy preserves us from falling, and Prayers obtain to us the Grace of being faithful.

Those that ask shall receive, and and those that seek shall find, and to those that knock, the Door shall be opened.

The Love of God makes us pray, and Prayer produces that Love.

Prayers are the shortest and surest means to correct our Faults, 'tis for want of Prayers, most commonly, we are so apt to fall.

'Tis our own Fault we don't enjoy the true Treasures, because we need only ask to obtain them.

Fasting, without praying, signifies little; but Prayers make us fast, and Fasting makes us pray.

What-

Whatsoever you ask for in your Prayers, will be granted you, provided you pray in the Faith.

Put your Hopes and Comfort in the Lord, and he will accomplish the Designs of your Heart.

He that seeks the Lord, shall be in want of nothing.

The Lord keeps a watchful Eye over those that remain faithful; he forgives those that are humble; he hears their Prayers, but treats the Proud according to their Deserts.

The Lord keeps Life and Death in his Hands; he impoverishes and enriches, he pulls down and sets up at Pleasure.

Vain-Glory is a most detestable Evil, and the greatest of all Illusions. It corrupts in us every thing which is good, it robs us of the true Glory, and of the Grace of Heaven.

All human Glory, all temporal Honours, the Grandeur and Lustre of the World, all these, I say, are
no-

nothing but Folly and Vanity, if compared to everlasting Glory.

If you become not as humble as an Infant, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, says our Saviour *Jesus Christ*; and he that is the greatest among you, let him be like your Servant; for he that exalts himself shall be debased, and he that debases himself, shall be exalted.

All Virtues are vain and insignificant without Humility. 'Tis from the Humility of our Heart, ought to spring all our Actions and all our Words.

We don't make any further Progress in Virtue, than our Humility encreases.

The Spirit of God is Humility. A true and sincere Humility ought to be such, as that we would be at the last; but there is still a higher Degree of Humility, that is, that we would be even nothing; and contented with whatever befalls us.

A voluntary Humiliation is subject to Pride; but 'tis not so if we renounce to our own Wills, and submit them to others.

Envy, Jealousie, Quarrels and Disputes, do all arise from Pride.

If you be really humble, you will not be troubled with any of these Vices.

He who thinks himself something, is deceived, he is actually nothing.

The more humble we are, the more generous we are; because we trust less to our selves, and our Confidence in God encreases.

If we are humbled by Men, we have no occasion to think it hard, if we consider how guilty we are before God.

Let us be always humble, and little in our own Eyes, and we shall seldom fall into Temptation and Sin.

Man's Life is a continual Temptation on Earth.

We

We were never the better Christians for being Great in this World, for relishing its Pleasures; we were not made to take any Rest here, but to obtain, by our continual Labour, Sufferings and Humility, (through the Merits of our Saviour) that Repose and Glory which God prepares for us in Heaven.

Obedience is the Soul and Measure of Humility. Obedience is better than Corporal Mortifications, because it is better than Sacrifice.

A Christian has no reason to be afflicted at any thing, but those Sins, which either he or his Neighbour commits against God.

We ought not to be vex'd if we hear any to speak evil of us; for if what they say is true, we ought to amend, and if it be false, it gives us an Opportunity of exercising our Virtue.

We must submit to the transitory Pains and Evils of this World,
or

or else expect to suffer everlasting Pains and Torments in the other.

He that would be every thing in God, must think of nothing but him.

He that is given to Slander, carries the Devil on his Tongue; and he that hearkens to him, has him in his Ears.

When we are in earnest to repent, we easily part with our Riches; and we dread more to mis-use them, than a Miser is eager to scrape them together.

'Tis more easie for a Camel to pass through the eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter Heaven; says our Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

Those are not the richest Men, that are in Possession of vast Revenues; but those that don't covet them, and are contented with what they have.

Those who complain of their hard Fortune, should complain of themselves, because they covet a Happiness that is such only in outward

ward appearance, in stead of seeking after the true Felicity.

The Rich and Great Men of this World, have great Numbers of Slaves at their Command; when at the same time, they are often times Slaves themselves to their own Passions.

'Tis the Extremity of Misery, to have it in ones power to do all the ill, one will, and to have nothing that might prevent ones falling under Sin; and after all, this is the only prerogative the Rich and Potent in this World can boast of.

If you will be a true Christian, you must make your self truly poor and humble.

Rich Men are not Rich, but for the sake of the Poor, and the Poor are Poor, for the benefit of the Rich.

The desire we have of being Charitable to the Poor, ought not to serve us for a pretence to heap up Wealth; for he whose Heart is full

full of Charity, will always find something to give.

Love of Poverty belongs peculiarly to the Son of God, who became Poor himself, to enrich us with Eternal Riches.

To desire nothing of this World, to wish to be deprived of whatever it has bestowed upon us, and to believe there is nothing that is good in us; this is the State of a perfect Christian.

Such a Self-love as delights in extraordinary Mortifications, and despises those ordinary ones, which serve to destroy that Extravagancy, is the Effect only of a secret and dangerous Vanity.

Let us not be tired in that place, where God has obliged us to be; but on the contrary let us take delight in meeting there, with what may be displeasing to our Senses.

Let us not consider our Domesticks not as Servants only, but also as our Brethren; they being Christians as well as we; we must bear

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bear with Humility and Patience their Faults, as we desire God to excuse ours.

Keep what you have, lest another take away your Reward.

The Potters Vessels are try'd in the Furnace, and so are Men in their Afflictions.

God makes us infirm, to make us humble and patient, and to render us conformable to *Jesus Christ*.

God is the untainted Source of all Comfort; whenever we seek for it in other things, they frequently prove the Subject of our Sadness; but every thing shall succeed well to them, who fear God.

A Christian gains more by his Enemies than by his Friends, because the first occasion his Reward and Beatitude; according to the Assurance given thereof in the Gospel, that they are happy when they are persecuted by Men.

'Tis

'Tis not enough to learn to act well, we must also learn how to suffer well, and how to dye well.

Deny your selves, take up your Cross, and follow me, says our Saviour.

He that pretends to belong to Christ, must live like as he lived.

Let your Light shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and your Father be glorify'd, who is in Heaven.

Watch, because you know not at what Hour the Lord is to come.

Happy is the Servant whom his Master finds awake, when he comes and knocks at the Door.

Moral and Political Maxims.

I.

ALL our Business ought to be, to use our Endeavours to know and fulfil our Duty; not to do any thing but what God will have us to do, and to do it
as.

as he will, and when he would have us. There is no true Repose, nor true Tranquillity but in the Love and Exercise of Virtue.

II.

A Man, to speak properly, lives no longer than he keeps the Spirit in exercise, and performs Virtuous Actions.

III.

That which hinders most People from being good and Vertuous, is, because they are more solicitous in talking than in practising Virtue. We talk of an honest Man, but seldom trouble our Heads to be so.

IV.

Conscience is a Witness within us, which follows us in all places, and Reproaches us with our Vices, in representing them without intermission before our Eyes. The

re-

reproaches of Conscience are more insupportable to the Wicked, than all the Torments and Punishments that have been invented; they make them insupportable to themselves.

V.

Most Men, are almost at all times govern'd by their Passions. Prudence is the Rule of a Wise Man, but of these there are but few, and the Wifest of them all are not so at all times.

VI.

6. Wicked Men deserve Pity, they do more wrong to themselves than to others; because when they do an Ill Action they Corrupt their Hearts, Blind their Minds, Draw upon themselves Vengeance, both from God and Men; and to increase their Misery, an Unfortunate Death, and Everlasting Torments.

VII. Were

VII.

Were we truly good as we ought to be, the Ill Words and Actions of Men, would not Corrupt ours, nor make us alter our Conduct.

VIII.

God's Law is given us in a very clear and intelligible manner. What Commands are laid upon us are within the reach of every Man's Capacity. It affords us sufficient Light, to make us do well, but we are for diving too far into the point, and instead of applying ourselves to what is laid open to us, we will penetrate into what is hidden from us; this proves the Cause of frequent Errors.

IX.

Great Conquests, Magnificent Structures, Monuments of Marble and Brass, &c. don't make up the Glory of a Prince; that which
ren-

renders him truly Glorious to Posterity, is, to have Reign'd in the Hearts of his Subjects, by his Conduct full of Mildness, Equity and free from Self-Interest.

X.

An easie Prince, who suffers himself to be govern'd by his Ministers, is Guilty of much Injustice; private Interest has at all times been noxious to the Publick.

XI.

The Lives of Princes are a Mixture of good and bad, they being Men, like other People.

XII.

Princes are Prais'd rather out of Custom and Interest, than Affection.

XIII.

Liberality is as pernicious to a Prince as Avarice, unless it be
re-

regulated by Prudence. 'Tis a great piece of Weakness, not to have the Power of refusing, what is often ask'd without reason.

XIV.

A Prince that knows how to govern, is the only fit Person to teach that Art to his Children. How can a Man teach another what he never learn'd himself. Theory oftentimes corrupts our Mind, 'tis a Prince only who knows the true Use and Practice.

XV.

A Prince ought to be liberal when Necessity requires; but always to have more regard to the Publick than Private Necessities.

XVI.

A Great Fortune has Flattery for its constant Attendant, this nourishes the Faults of those Princes that give ear to it, so that they

they become incorrigible, because a Flatterer always know how to hit them on the weak side.

XVII.

The Laws require the utmost Rigour of things; because they were made to Correct our Manners, and Reform Abuses. It belongs to the Prince, to be the Moderator, according to the different Conjunctions of time.

XVIII.

'Tis a dangerous Employment at all times, to be a Minister to the Passions of an Ill Prince; they commonly cast the the Heinousness of their Crimes and Ill Actions upon those who have put them in Execution; being asham'd to own them themselves. They make use of Ill Actions as long as they reap the Benefit thereof; but they are sure to leave those that acted them in the Lurch, for fear they should

betray them; so that, generally speaking, they receive Punishment as a due Reward of their Crimes.

XIX.

When we go about to speak in Praise of a Prince, we should represent him such as he is, or at least such as he ought to be.

XX.

Slander is a very Pernicious thing, especially if we use it with respect to Princes; first or last, it meets with its due Punishment.

XXI.

A Prince should speak but seldom upon the Spot; he ought not to speak without being prepar'd for it, and then to say but little; every thing he says being taken notice of, the less he speaks, the less is subject to he Censure.

XXII.

XXII.

Princes ought to detest Traytors and Treason, and never to make use of them; both their Honour and own Security lying at Stake. When they set Prisons and Daggers, or other treasonable Practices to Work against their Enemies; they shew their own Subjects the way how to make use of them against themselves.

XXIII.

A King tho' despoil'd of his Territories is still a King, he still retains the Title of a King, even tho' he did not deserve to bear it; he ought never to be faint-hearted or stoop too low to him who is the stronger, let his Condition be what it will: He ought still to demean himself like a King, ever in the midst of his greatest Misfortunes; 'tis this that will make him maintain his Rank in spite of Fortune.

XXIV.

Since the Welfare or the Ruine of a State depends on Wise or Ill Councils, that Prince is happy, who by his Prudence can discern the good and the evil.

XXV.

The Wisdom of the Prince and his Councils, makes the Happiness of the State.

XXVI.

Princes are, above all other People, obliged to say little, and hear a great deal; they ought to improve every thing to their Benefit. Good Councils are good in themselves, and bad Councils serve to confirm the Goodness of the other.

XXVII.

At Court every Man makes it his Business to be obliging; hence it is that a Courtier is more polite than a Citizen, whose
time

time is wholly taken up with his own Affairs.

XXVIII.

If a vile Courtier, who in every thing aims only at his own Interest, would but make a true Comparifon betwixt the Benefit he reaps from his base parasitical Courtships, and the preciousness of his Time he loses on that account, he would soon be cured of his Blindness, and save himself abundance of trouble; he would make much better use of his Time, he would lead a much less troublesome and more contented Life.

XXIX.

A high Birth, unless attended with Merits and great Qualifications, serves only to render more conspicuous, those Faults which would scarce be taken notice of in a Person of an Inferior Rank.

XXX.

We gain oftentimes more by Negotiations, than by War; we lose often more than we get, by gaining great Battels.

XXXI.

'Tis a hard Task to reform Abuses and old Customs. The Distempers of the Mind, are like unto those of the Body. Chronical inveterate Distempers, require strong and violent Remedies for their Cure. The Diseases of the Mind, owing their Origin to our Passions, wont admit of any Remedies, unless such as are stronger than those Passions that cause them.

XXXII.

Nothing is more easie than to exclaim against the Luxury and Disorders of a State; and nothing, at the same time, is more difficult than to reform them, the Remedy being often worse than the Disease
itself.

itself. If we go about to reform a State, we must not consider so much what is best, but what can best be done. 'Tis best to leave Time for the Reformation of those Abuses it has introduced, if we find the same is not likely to be effected without violent Remedies, and without a hazard of losing all.

XXXIII.

In the Grants of Dignities and Employments, a Prince ought not so much consider the great Qualifications of a Subject, but chiefly whether he be qualify'd for that Station or Office he is to be entrusted with

XXXIV.

A Man of good Morals, makes a good Man; but this makes him not a good Governour of a State, unless he has also learned the Art of governing well, and making himself obey'd.

XXXV.

Nothing is more easie, than to make an ill use of a great Station; and nothing more difficult, than to discharge his Duty in every thing it requires.

XXXVI.

Could great Men but make due Reflection, that, as their Wealth and Riches may increase every day, so their Senses which enjoy them, decrease continually; this Consideration would make them less covetous, and less ambitious.

XXXVII.

Each Condition of Life has its own Troubles; and even those things which seem to be great and delightful, when examined to the bottom, turn to a slender account, and often have a strong mixture of Bitterness.

XXXVIII.

XXXVIII.

*Tis a great Misfortune, to complain always of our Condition, without endeavouring to mend it; because Complaints serve only to make it more vexatious and troublesome.

XXXIX.

Liberty, and standing in Defence of the Publick Good, are the most specious Pretences, made use of, by those who stand up for that Liberty, with no other Intention, than to suppress it afterwards themselves with the more ease.

XL.

No body but a good Man can be a faithful Man; no Faith is to be expected from a wicked Man.

XLI.

*Tis glorious to stand up for a good Cause, for in maintain-
O 5 ing

ing a bad one, even the greatest Exploits lose their true Value.

XLII.

'Tis much better for a Man to concur with another in a good Opinion, by the Strength of his Reason, than by the Force of Authority.

XLIII.

The World, most commonly, judges of Things by the Event. Let your Conduct be never so good, if the Success is not answerable, your ill Fortune itself must pass for a Fault, and but few People will justify it.

XLIV.

Great Qualifications prove often the Ruin of him who is Master of them: A great Capacity raises Envy, as a smaller Capacity begets Scorn. We dread the Reputation of great and good Men, as much as we despise the Baseness of

of a mean Station; so that great Virtues are as much feared, as great Vices are detested.

XLV.

As every thing we observe in Mankind, is not absolutely a Virtue, so every thing is not an absolute Vice; there is generally a certain Intermixture of good and ill Qualities.

XLVI.

There is a certain Vicissitude in all Human Affairs; 'tis this that makes our Manners alter with the Times: Poverty, which is always opposite to Luxury, introduces Frugality: Age is attended by Diseases, and Adversity sometimes corrects our Vices contracted by a long Chain of Prosperity.

XLVII.

If we did but make due Reflection, that most People act according to their own Characters

we should, instead of exclaiming against them, dispense with them more patiently. Sincerity does not belong to a Knave, nor Wisdom to a Fool.

XLVIII.

The wrong Notions we conceive of Things, makes us voluptuous, idle, full of Inquietudes and ill Designs; whatsoever does not tend to render a Man accomplish'd, is not truly *Good*; and whatsoever does produce the contrary Effect, is not properly to be called *Evil*.

XLIX.

Nothing makes a deeper Impression upon the Minds of the People, than an Opinion attended by Zeal and Superstition.

L.

Diversity of Opinions produces Parties? and these Rebellious and Intestine Wars.

LI.

LI.

There is nothing New under the Sun; nothing but what is the same thing after you have seen it once; so that it ought to be indifferent to a Man, whether his Life be long or short in this World, because 'tis always the same thing; and to see continually one thing, is the way to be tired of it.

LII.

'Tis a great piece of Folly to make an account upon a Life which may be at an end every Minute, and which, though of never so long a Continuance, if compared to Eternity, is scarce a Moment.

LIII.

He that knows how to moderate his Appetite, and to make good use of his good Fortune, has found out the Art of being happy.

LIV.

LIV.

We are tired with every thing, and at last are tired with our selves, when we have nothing else to vent our Spleen upon.

LV.

Such as are given to admire every thing, are commonly foolish; Admiration being a Sign of Weakness.

LVI.

Friendships, even those which seem the strongest and most firmly settled, prove often nothing else but a well contrived Point of Interest.

LVII.

Friendship, if you would have it prove agreeable, must be attended with Prudence and Discretion.

LVIII.

An indiscreet and imprudent Friend, proves often as mischievous, as a real Enemy. He
thinks

thinks himself bound to side with us, whether we are in the Right or Wrong, without any regard to the Occasions or Circumstances of Time and Place, all which serves only to exasperate People against us, and raises Contests and Differences, which are much better avoided.

LIX.

He is happy that knows how to employ his time, so as to be satisfy'd within himself; this is the way never to be tired.

LX.

Repose and Tranquillity depend rather on our selves, than the Place we live in; 'tis an Error to imagine that we may meet with true Tranquillity in a Solitude; it belongs to our selves to calm the Disturbances of our Heart, which no Retirement, no place of Retreat, be it never so far from the noise of the World, can effect.

LXI.

All our Retirements, even to the most solitary places in the World, will stand us in no stead, if we don't leave our Passions behind us; or at least, carry along with us a firm Resolution of striving against them.

LXII.

According to the true Maxims of Wisdom, we stand in need of no other Knowledge and Science, than that which teaches us how to know our selves, how to reform our Manners, and how to make us truly Virtuous: And, if we rightly examine, what it is the greatest part of Mankind bestow their time upon, what they read, and what is they study, we shall find them, for the most part, insignificant, if not dangerous.

LXIII.

Reading is absolutely necessary for the Accomplishment of our Minds,

Minds, in giving it Understanding and Knowledge. Conversation in the World will render a Man more polite, but seldom instructs him.

LXIV.

In Reading, we must apply our selves to a few, but choice Books; and such as have a greater share of true Reason, than of Clashy Wit in them; and such as will rather instruct, than please.

LXV.

There are but few who read as they should do, and reap the true Benefit of their Reading; because few know how to chuse their Books, how to read with Discretion, and have so delicate and refined a Relish, as to understand rightly the true Character of the Authors, or have Capacity enough to be convinced by him.

LXVI.

When you read History, your
Bu-

Business is to know the Transactions and Inclinations of Men.

LXVII.

What makes Knowledge nauseous and tiresome in some learned Men, is, because there are but few among them who have a nice Palate and Politeness, and closely follow the Dictates of Reason.

LXVIII.

All the vain Flourishes of Rhetorick, only discover the Corruption of Mens Hearts, most of which would rather be flatter'd and seduced, than instructed. Simplicity is the Character of true Eloquence. Truth wants no Paint nor Foreign Ornaments; all our Discourse ought to tend to nothing else, but how to make her to be known to Men. We should therefore speak, not to please, but to instruct and set Things in a clear Light.

LXIX.

LXIX.

Conversation with the better Sort, gives a Man a certain Politeness, without which we may be fitted for Business, but never please in Company; nay, some would be insupportable to Persons of a genteel Spirit.

LXX.

Knowledge lays the Foundation of an honest Gentleman, and Conversation brings it to Perfection. Study improves our Natural Talents, and enlightens our Mind; Conversation puts the last Hand to the Work.

LXXI.

The World is a great Voluminous Book, which teaches us to take Example by others; and, if well made use of, may make a learned Person an honest Man.

LXXII.

We may shew a great Veneration for Antiquity, but we ought not to receive all their Opinions,
as

as if we were Children, and so submit blindly to what they tell us; we must examine them, and adhere to Truth.

LXXIII.

The Antients may inspire us with good Thoughts; but as every one ought to make use of his own, he must not be a Slave to theirs.

LXXIV.

Each Age has its peculiar Relish, Genius, Character and Politicks.

LXXV.

As each Nation has a peculiar Genius belonging to it, so they differ in Manners and their outward Behaviour. But the essential Foundation of good Qualifications is to be met with every where.

LXXVI.

The Diversity of Temperaments has a great Influence upon the different Sentiments Men entertain concerning

cerning Supernatural Things. A meek Temper is full of Submission: Timidity is always attended with Fear; and instable Temper, full of Doubts and Stubbornness, will seldom let a Man recede from his own Opinion.

LXXVII.

The Mistakes of the Heart are always more dangerous, than those of our Imagination. Our Judgment corrects the Imagination, but our Heart will draw us unto Evil, in spite of our Judgment.

LXXVIII.

Novelty carries along with it a certain Charm, our Mind is not able to withstand, without much Difficulty. 'Tis this that makes even the best Things lose their Relish with us, as if they were out of Date, and such as are despicable in themselves to be coveted like new ones; because we judge of them according to our Fancy only, or our

cor-

corrupted Palate, and weak Understanding.

LXXIX.

We should at all times be very scrupulous concerning Matters of Religion ; we must not touch upon that Point, without a great deal of Circumspection and Caution. A Change of this Nature, is highly worthy our Consideration, and draws after it frequent Abuses and Inconveniencies.

LXXX.

The Corruption of our Mind is much more dangerous, and much more to be feared, than that of the Body, because it kills both Soul and Body ; and after all, we are mindful only of the Infirmities of the Body ; and there are such, as desire to live for no other end, than to gratifie their Passions, and wallow in Vices.

LXXXI.

LXXXI.

A great Genius is seldom without great Faults, because he is generally haughty; on the contrary, Men of moderate Parts being more humble, are not so often subject to Errors.

LXXXII.

We need be mindful of no more, than that think what we do, and what we say, though our Judgment is bounded within narrow Limits, it meets in a continual Agitation; and this kind of Distraction, in reference to the different Objects presented to it, makes us judge but very imperfectly of Things.

LXXXIII.

If we intend to lead a happy Life, we must be satisfied with whatever Casualties befall us; 'tis a fault to vent ones Anger upon other Men without any Reason;
or

or to murmur against Accidents, because they are insensible of our Complaints.

LXXXIV.

The common People are always excessive, either in Mirth or Sadness, because they blindly follow the first Motions of either. Any thing that is superstitious, or has some thing that is extraordinary in it, is very pleasing to, and has a great Influence upon them, especially if it carry some Probability along with it: For, as they scarce ever act with Judgment, and mistake Appearances for Realities, they soon take any thing that is new and suits their Fancies, for Truths.

LXXXV.

There are but few that deserve the Name of Polite Men, because few are of a noble Mind, and Masters of those necessary Qualifications, *viz.* Civility, Complaisance,

fance, Discretion and Circumspection, which make a polite Gentleman.

LXXXVI.

'Tis not just we should despise People of a mean Birth, because it depends not on us to be born Great.

LXXXVII.

Conversation is the Cement of the Commerce of a Civil Life; 'tis by Conversation our Minds communicate their Thoughts, and our Hearts discover their Motions. 'Tis necessary to Man, because he was made to be sociable.

LXXXVIII.

Never look after those that would have you not to think of them, and that are willing to forget you, for in making your court to them, you will, instead of gaining their good Will, only raise their Anger against you.

LXXXIX.

'Tis a great Happiness to meet with an understanding, discreet and faithful Friend; and to be in a dition to take and to follow his Advice. For, it frequently happens, that we think it a Dishonour to hearken to any body's Counsel but our own, and so we go astray for want of taking a good Guide.

XC.

It requires as much Prudence and Discretion to give good Advice, as it does to follow it. There is no Man but what stands in need of good Counsel; and therefore we ought not to reject it, though it be not given with a good Grace.

XCI.

A good Humour or Temper, is as requisite to make one live a pleasing Life within ones self, as it is to live at Ease with others, because
ill

Ill-temper'd People commonly are as troublesome to others, as they are to themselves.

XCII.

Humour has most commonly as good a Share in great Actions, as personal Merits. The Affairs of this World are transacted by Men, govern'd more by their Passions, than by Reason and true Politics.

XCIII.

A Mixture of Passion destroys the very Intent of our Discourse; because our Speech represents not only our Conceptions, but also in what manner they were conceived.

XCIV.

Industry frequently makes a full amends for the want of Merit; hence it is, that the Art of making ones self appear valuable in the World, commonly gains

one more Reputation, than even the greatest Merit is able to do.

XCV.

We should never be vex'd at what is spoken against us; if it be true, we ought to reform it; if, on the contrary, what is reported of us, is false, if we appear to be concern'd at it, the World will think it actually true. If we despise such Reports, they lose their Credit, and he that made them, sees himself disappointed of the Pleasure he proposed to himself.

XCVI.

To be over-credulous and rash in our Judgment, concerning Matters that come before us, proves the cause of great Irregularities. 'Tis not sufficient to consider superficially both of Words and Actions to give a sound Judgment; we must search to the Depth of it at Leisure, and without Prejudice,

and pry into the Motives as well of the Words as of the Actions.

XCVII.

Those Pleasures which most flatter our Fancies, and appear most durable to us, are in reality no more than a pleasing Dream; and, after we have tasted them, leave behind them nothing but Vexation, because they lasted only for so small a time.

XCVIII.

You shall scarce ever hear of some great Crime committed, but what is follow'd and attended by others.

XCIX.

There is scarce any thing in the World, what a Woman is not capable of doing, after she has once prostituted her Honour.

C.

There are abundance of Women, whose Souls are as much painted as their Faces; they do nothing without Design; Dissimulation is the main Art they use to impose upon Mankind.

CI.

'Tis the very Nature of Reason to be peaceable and easie; whatever is transacted in a tumultuary, turbulent and violent Manner, is commonly contrary to Reason.

CII.

In the Heat of wicked Actions, we must expect more from Time than from Reason. We must stay, and with Patience hope, that the World will undeceive it self; since too much Reason oftentimes makes things worse.

CIII.

Patience in excessive Pains, Afflictions, Disgraces and Misfortunes, is an infallible Mark of a great, couragious, and truly virtuous Heart; 'tis nothing but Weakness that makes us fall under the Weight of them. Those that make away with themselves, when under Misfortunes, shew themselves Cowards, because they have not Resolution enough to support the Character they had in the World, under their Misfortunes.

CIV.

The Hopes most Men conceive to escape with Life, even in the most violent Diseases, make them insensible of Death.

CV.

Play-houses are Nurseries for the Corruption of good Manners, and Schools of Vice.

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CVI.

Interest or some other Passion being most generally the Object of Marriages, 'tis no wonder if there is so little Friendship in it ; Indifference, Scorn, Mistrusts, Jealousies, and Inquietudes, which produce Suspicions, Complaints, and Quarrels, soon remove even the very Shade and Resemblance of Friendship in this State.

CVII.

True Wisdom consists in performing just and pious Actions.

CVIII.

'Tis no easie Matter to know the real Truth of great Actions, because they are most commonly very differently related ; some believe every thing they hear, and so relate it to others ; some disguise Truth by Fictions ; and thus Truths and Falsties are transmitted to Posterity.

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CIX.

The Wicked must be punish'd in order to reform them, and to protect the Innocent against them; that they may not be corrupted by their ill Example, and the Hopes of Impunity.

CX.

Poverty commonly inspires Men with Boldness and Temerity; no People more dangerous, than those that have nothing to lose.

CXI.

False Reports are most commonly raised by a sort of People, who knowing they are not capable of making themselves to be taken notice of, by their good Qualifications, endeavour to build their Fortune, upon the Ruin of the Reputation of others.

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CXII.

We might correct our own Faults, but will not; at the same time, though it is not in our Power to reform others, we will always be observing their Miscarriages.

CXIII.

Unjust Undertakings, though they prove never so successful, yet always turn to the Detriment of the Prince that commands them, because they make him to be hated by other Princes. His aim ought to be, to establish his Reputation upon a real Esteem; without which a Kingdom cannot flourish long.

CXIV.

Some Men of Learning are worse than other People; because they make it their Business only to know, but not to practise.

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CXV.

Nothing is more deceitful or dangerous than a Hypocrite; an honest Man ought to appear plain and natural; Frankness ought to appear both in his Countenance and Actions.

CXVI.

We should at all times mistrust those that praise us to an Excess; they are prodigal of their Praises, with a Design only the easier to deceive those they praise; modest Praises are most commonly the most sincere, and the least to be suspected.

F I N I S.

CXV.

Nothing is more deceitful or dangerous than a Hypocrite; an honest Man ought to appear plain and natural; Bankers ought to appear both in his Countenance and Actions.

CXVI.

We should at all times mistrust those that praise us to an excess; they are the most hypocritical of men. Praises, which are only the effects of flattery, they prize; but to deserve the praise; modest Prizes are most commonly the most sincere, and the least to be suspected.



